



## **PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA**

### **TRANSCRIPT**

### **HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESSES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Metro Tasmania Pty Ltd**

**Wednesday 26 November 2025**

### **MEMBERS**

Ms Burnet (Chair)  
Mr Rob Fairs (Deputy Chair)  
Mr Vica Bayley  
Ms Kristie Johnston  
Mr Marcus Vermey  
Mr Dean Winter

### **OTHER PARTICIPATING MEMBERS**

Mr David O'Byrne  
Mr Roger Jaensch  
Ms Jen Butler  
Prof George Razay



## **WITNESSES IN ATTENDANCE**

**Hon. Kerry Vincent**, Minister for Infrastructure and Transport

**Metro Tasmania**

**Tony Braxton-Smith**  
Chair

**Laurie Hansen**  
Acting CEO

**(In support)**

**Jesse Penfold**  
General Manager Finance

**Jacqui Allen**  
General Manager People and Safety

**Kellie Dean**  
Company Secretary and General Manager Corporate Services

**Damian Shirley**  
General Manager Business Transformation

**Damian Arkley**  
Acting Chief Operations Officer



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## Metro Tasmania Pty Ltd

**CHAIR** - Welcome everyone. I welcome the minister and staff of Metro Tasmania. We're now scrutinising Metro Tasmania.

Welcome to the minister and staff, CEO, Chair, along with others at the table.

The time for scrutiny is two hours. Members will be familiar with the practice of seeking additional information, which must be agreed to, to be taken by the minister or the Chair of the Board and the questions handed in writing to the secretary.

I invite the minister to introduce any other persons at the table, including names and positions. Then if you'd like to give an opening statement, minister, thank you.

**Mr VINCENT** - Thank you. On my right-hand side I have my chief of staff, Tim Lovibond. I will ask the Chair of Metro to introduce himself and anybody else at the table or who might be coming up to the table. Thank you.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Thank you, minister. Tony Braxton-Smith, Chair of Metro Tasmania. To my side, Laurie Hansen, who is Acting Chief Executive Officer. We also have on the table behind us: Jesse Penfold, the General Manager of Finance; Jacqui Allen, the General Manager of People and Safety; Damien Arkley, the manager of Statewide Operations; Damian Shirley, the General Manager of Business Transformation; Kellie Dean, our Company Secretary; and Rowena Gilbertson, our Manager for Stakeholder and Corporate Affairs.

I might, during the course of this, ask them to prompt my memory on certain matters.

**CHAIR** - Wonderful, thank you.

**Mr VINCENT** - Three months ago I was appointed as the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, and I've enjoyed getting to know Metro's bus operators on my travel. I recently visited the Moonah depot where I was able to see firsthand the work Metro does, delivering safe, reliable and accessible public transport for Tasmanians. As the state's largest Tasmanian-owned passenger transport operator, Metro connects communities across Hobart, Launceston and Burnie, completing more than 9 million service kilometres and providing around 7 million passenger journeys each year.

In 2024-25, Metro continued to modernise its systems and strengthen customer experience. A major highlight was the statewide rollout of real-time bus tracking, through the Metro Tas app, giving passengers live information on bus locations and arrival times. Within a week of the launch more than 42,000 people downloaded or upgraded the app, transforming the way Tasmanians plan their journeys.

Metro also advanced Tasmania's move towards a cleaner and more sustainable future, with the launch of the hydrogen-electric bus trial in Hobart. The commissioning of Tasmania's first hydrogen refueling station at Mornington represents a milestone in the state's transition to zero-emission transport.

Recruitment and retention remain a key challenge and an ongoing priority. In 2024-25 Metro continued to invest in improved recruitment and retention processes, expanded training

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capability and streamlined on-boarding for new bus operators. During the year, Metro's Put Your Career in Motion campaign attracted new talent, with 136 new bus operators trained and serving in their communities.

The company also continued to prioritise safety and wellbeing. The rollout of the security screens is well underway, and workplace injuries have fallen by 37 per cent in three years. Employee engagement rose to 65 per cent, reflecting stronger morale and pride in the organisation.

Metro's financial performance reflects the reality of a challenging operating environment. Like many public transport providers across Australia, Metro faces rising costs, ageing fleet pressures and a constrained revenue model. In response, the Metro Tasmania Board has engaged independent experts to identify efficiency opportunities and support longer-term sustainability measures, ensuring Metro can continue to invest in services, safety and innovation, while working closely with me as minister.

Despite these pressures, Metro remains financially responsible and focused on improving the experiences for customers and the community.

I also acknowledge the leadership of outgoing CEO, Katie Cooper, earlier this year who, after over five years, developed major advances in fleet renewal technology and sustainability.

Laurie Hansen, now general manager of business improvement and acting CEO, will continue guiding Metro's transformation as it enters its next phase.

Metro Tasmania ends the year with clear direction, strong foundations and a shared commitment to make the journey better for all Tasmanians. With a dedicated workforce, modern technology and sustainable transport trials now in motion, Metro is building a safer, smarter and more connected future for Tasmania's public transport. Thank you, Chair.

**Ms BUTLER** - Minister, Metro reported a loss for the financial year due to structural revenue pressures and rising costs, recording a loss before tax of \$5.9 million compared to a loss in the previous financial year of \$4.6 million. Patronage was materially at the same level. The annual report states the funding model put in place to support the half-price fares initiative effectively froze Metro fare box revenue at 2023-24 levels. This is also \$2.278 million below the 2019 levels, which is the revenue assumption on which DSG has fixed contract payments to Metro. Why is DSG maintaining the fixed contract payment on revenue assumption from 2019?

**Mr VINCENT** - I will hand that to the chair.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Thank you. If I may, the current contract for services that Metro entered into with DSG took a period of time to negotiate. It was before the time that I was appointed to the board - indeed, everyone on the board has come subsequent to this agreement. The previous contract expired on 31 December 2019, and there were budget pressures and there was an extended period of negotiation. The challenge was that this was right in the middle of COVID so no-one knew where the financial results were going to go.

The structure of the contract was such that the risk on revenue was transferred from DSG to Metro. At the time the contract was entered into in 2022, it was acknowledged by DSG that

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there was going to be a need to address structural issues on the revenue side to achieve a sustainable funding position, but both parties wanted to understand, first off, where was patronage and revenue going to return.

The administrative arrangements they put in place for administration of the half-price fair initiative were - I think we had a difference of view of how to deal with it - and DSG prevailed with their administrative model which at the time we expressed some dissatisfaction about, but the underlying issue is there is a structural challenge long-term with the current contract which is in place till 2029.

Now it's also the case that both parties have been talking about things that could relieve the pressure. It's very clear to us that part of that is the introduction of new technology that enables us to run the network more efficiently. That's going to be part of the benefit of the introduction of HASTUS in combination with the ticketing system. HASTUS is a software program commonly in use in the industry, which enables you to program efficiently the use of your buses, rostering and scheduling of buses on any given network. We're scheduled to bring that in next -

**Ms BUTLER** - If we can go back to the revenue as such and the structural issues, that's what I'm talking about because that's from 2019. It's 2025, so I really want to interrogate that first today in the committee. I think that would work quite well because that speaks to why there is such a loss, and it mentions that in the annual report as well.

Why has the fixed contract between Metro and DSG, based on those revenue assumptions, not been rectified over that last six years - or even over the last three years post COVID? It really pretty clearly states that that is one of the reasons why Metro is running at such a loss.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - It is one of the reasons, but it's not the only reason. At the present time, there are three buckets: there are operational efficiencies, there are business efficiencies, and there is potential revenue adjustment. Those three together will address Metro's financial sustainability in the medium term.

We've had conversations previously with DSG and with the previous minister in relation to how we address the financial sustainability of the business. The government has confirmed its support, but we agreed that we should first look to our cost base to do what we can to improve the cost efficiency of the business before turning to the government to address the revenue gap. So -

**Ms BUTLER** - It's been since 2019, so just through the minister, sorry. Minister, is DSG or is the government deliberately underfunding Metro? Because that's no way to run a business. You're a business owner yourself. Why would you base projected revenues on figures from six years ago, knowing that it will lead your business to have a continual loss? Why hasn't this been rectified? Is it on purpose?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - I may on your behalf, minister, just to clarify, the contract was entered into mid 2022. It provides for annual adjustments for CPI and other factors on various lines of cost. As I said, in 2022, no-one was certain as to the direction it would go in relation to the patronage and that ultimately was going to be the determinant of our final revenue position. We've incurred additional costs during the intervening period -

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**Ms BUTLER** - Since 2019, yes, you have.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Since 2022, the cost base - started from 2022 the revenue base was deliberately the year before COVID struck because that was the last reliable estimate, and everyone acknowledged at the time that COVID was a 1-in-100-year event. You would not base your forward forecast on a 10-year contract on something that was a 1-in-100-year event, which at the time was seen as something that would result in a dip and a return. That return of patronage has been experienced differently in different jurisdictions, but, in general, most jurisdictions have seen a patronage dip. Most jurisdictions are therefore dealing with a revenue -

**Ms BUTLER** - A revenue assumption.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - A revenue issue and the revenue assumption. I have not pressed either the minister or DSG on the revenue assumptions in the short term because I want to be clear and I think it's only fair to Tasmania's budget that we address what we reasonably think we can do in terms of our improvement to our cost base before we look for the gap in revenue. I say that because, yes, we estimate - and it's a pretty reliable estimate; it's about \$2.8 million that we would have received. That would not solve the problem. It would mean the loss is a smaller loss, but it's still a loss, so it's not simply me -

**Ms BUTLER** - It is documented, though, in the financial outcomes of the annual report:

The funding model put in place to support the half-price fares initiative effectively freezes ... the revenue assumption on which DSG has fixed contract payments to Metro. Adjusted for CPI, this translates into an impost of \$2.774 million per annum on Metro's underlying financial performance.

So it states there that the revenue assumption is one of the main reasons why. So it's stated in the annual report that there are structural issues and that's the main structural issue, so it looks like it's being deliberately run at a loss.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - On reflection, I can understand how you would interpret that from how I've written it.

**Ms BUTLER** - Well, an auditor or an accountant would read that as such.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Yes, in effect - allow me to clarify. The revenue position - the way that DSG determined that they would administer the half-price fare policy was that they would make us whole up to the level of our revenue in the previous year, but they felt that because there was potential for patronage growth, there should be no advantage, in other words, to Metro.

At the time we were saying, 'Well, hang on, Metro's starting \$2.6 million behind anyway, so how about we take a different view?'. Ultimately, they prevailed last year, but that was not the cause of the \$2.7 million gap. It was adding to the pressure by whatever the delta was between, if I could put it this way, just going 50:50 on the fares as opposed to going 50:50 but only up to a cap of the previous year's revenue.

**Ms BUTLER** - I will come back to that in the next round of questioning.

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**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - The point is that the net impact is about \$100,000, not \$2.7 million. The net impact of that decision DSG made - and I will clarify that number; I'm sure Jesse is going to quickly do some math - the incremental impact of that decision by DSG to administer the policy in that way is about \$100,000, and DSG has reconsidered its position for this year, so DSG is effectively doing as we asked, which is to match the revenue we get from the half-price fare, which is where we were initially saying, 'Just top up the fare box 50:50'.

**CHAIR** - I'm asking questions on behalf of the Greens. I'm curious, Mr Braxton-Smith, about what the department is doing and what sort of costs are coming back and some of network modelling and so forth. Are any of those costs being borne by Metro to do some of the work that really ought to be done by State Growth?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - I think you're making reference to the Greater Hobart network review - yes? In the Greater Hobart network review, we are closely involved with the DSG on that and want to be closely involved, but to my knowledge, unless I'm mistaken, they are doing all of the modelling and therefore they're incurring the additional costs associated with getting third parties who have the relevant expertise to model how the revised timetable will work. So we're not incurring any incremental cost in that process.

**CHAIR** - What about overall cost?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Overall cost is yet to be determined. In principle, we are looking at no increase to our net cost. The value of modern software is that whilst we're looking at those services where we're unable now, by virtue of changes in traffic conditions over the last 10 years, to meet the timetable requirement, we're looking at putting additional time into certain services. But that will be offset by finding efficiencies on how we schedule services across Hobart. That's the intent.

**CHAIR** - I might go to you, minister. This is a southern Tasmanian network review. Is there any input or contribution by private operators in relation to this network review?

**Mr VINCENT** - It's being done by DSG. I'm not across all their consultation methods on that but it's under review at the moment. DSG is responsible for the network, so they are the ones doing the work for their network to determine how that will come out to Metro and private operators.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Minister, in August 2023 there were 177 services cancelled by Metro. Based on your responses last week in Estimates, 120 services remain cancelled. When will those services be reintroduced?

**Mr VINCENT** - I will pass on for a bit more information. However, about 33 per cent to 34 per cent have been reintroduced. We've held off on the rest until the Greater Hobart network review is finalised to make sure we're going to be maximising any increase in services to the right area where the volumes are needed, before those other - you said 127, was it?

**Mr O'BYRNE** - No, 177 were cancelled in August 2023 and 120 still remain cancelled.

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**Mr VINCENT** - Okay, 120. The work being done under the network review will ascertain where the network needs to be changed, extended, added or brought back into it. Laurie, do you have any more information on that?

**Mr HANSEN** - Not so much. DSG is going to introduce phase 2 of the Greater Hobart network review post changes taking place in May, which was the timetable to change to adjust running times and fix up the late running more than anything else. The network change at that time will look at all the services in the whole Hobart network and, in particular, those remaining services that haven't returned.

The concern is that a lot of those services that came out, as I understand it, were low patronage trips: trips that weren't priority trips, in a sense. They will find their way back into the service, potentially all the kilometres and the hours into other or new services, but it'd be a problem if they put them in now and then moved them out later on in the year.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - I think the people who used to rely on those services would find them a priority, with respect. The reason the services were cancelled was allegedly because of driver shortage. Now it seems it's about waiting for the review. So is it the driver shortage or is it the review? What's the major instigator for this?

Based on feedback from community at the time, they may have been low patronage but they were essential. Public transport is an essential service, particularly to people in the outer suburbs who rely on it. What's the issue? Is it that you're waiting for the review, or is it still the driver issue?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - We have sufficient drivers to operate the current network and that's what we've worked towards. It took us a lot of time and much more effort than we thought when we were asked to put on additional services. It will take us some months to recruit, train and build our workforce to that number, but that is not currently the constraint. What we have agreed to and DSG has asked us to do is to hold off on the introduction of further services, because they want to examine where the service need is greatest.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - You called the cancellation of services 'temporary'. You're now saying that it's no longer temporary, it's permanent - so that's an acknowledgement. Between June 2023 and June 2025, the company has had \$4.5 million in withheld payments because of your failure to honour the contracts you signed up to. Now you are saying that you're not going to restore those services because they are no longer temporary and you're waiting for a review, but we don't know when this review will be done and completed.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - I think you're putting a lot of words in my mouth, Mr O'Byrne. First of all -

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Well, convince me that I'm wrong.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - First of all, the contract has an adjustment mechanism in it, which is a service payment adjustment mechanism. It was put there because there is a notion that DSG, which is the party that is the procurer of the services, may at their discretion and for reasons that they have -

**Mr O'BYRNE** - You cancelled these services.

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**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - for reasons that they have, either add services to our schedule or ask us to remove services from our schedule. They've used that mechanism to adjust the payments they make to us today. That is the basis of the \$4.5 million, so it's not a withholding. It is a contractually based service adjustment and it does reduce our revenue and impact our financials.

Second, we have been working harder. I don't want to beat around the bush. When we made the decision about it being temporary we thought six months. That's what we thought it would take to rebuild our workforce. The fact of the matter is that if you look back eight to 10 years ago, we used to hire and train about 30 drivers a year. Coming out of COVID, the challenge became more than 100 drivers a year to sustain and grow our workforce. That required us to spend a whole lot of time and effort, much more than we thought, to scale up to be able to do that in an environment where we still had a higher level of turnover than anyone expected.

We called them temporary at the time because we were really focused on making them temporary. I well understand now, in hindsight, that we could have chosen a different name that maybe didn't allow you to create a moment of embarrassment for us, for me, but -

**Mr O'BYRNE** - With respect, I'm not playing semantics on cancelling or suspension. The issue is you cancelled them and you called them a temporary suspension. They are still 120 down from the 177, so are they permanently cancelled?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - I cannot say whether those specific services will or will not be returned. It will be a decision of DSG. We were working on a program to return those services to the timetable we were asked -

**CHAIR** - We will move on, thank you.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - He's still answering the question.

**CHAIR** - Well, your question was very long, but I know it was very involved and it was good to hear it.

**Ms JOHNSTON** - Your annual report indicates that of your workforce of 559 total employees, 85 per cent are male and only 15 per cent are female. That is an appalling statistic when it comes to diversity in the workplace. What are you doing to address that? Have you identified the factors that are leading to this appalling discrepancy and lack of diversity in your workplace?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - We would like more diversity in our workforce. We have been working hard on our recruitment programs to find a way to increase the diversity, but our first priority is to get sufficient drivers to be able to operate the network. We have many fine and long-serving female bus drivers, including one who was given the Bus Association's national award and has 25 years of service.

It is a fact that sometimes industries that struggle to fill their quotas are the industries that have the imbalance that we have. We're sensitive to the issue, but the fact is we have had things in place that structurally are perhaps not suitable or as suitable to attracting female employees. For example, in our enterprise agreement there were strict limitations in relation to the amount

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of part-time employment we could offer and the basis on which we could offer it. One of the things we worked on very hard during the renegotiation of the bus operator agreement was to introduce more flexibility into the enterprise agreement such that we are able to offer more part-time and more flexible employment conditions that might attract more females to our workforce.

That is where we've been. We have continued to address the short-term need, which is to go through a recruitment campaign to raise the level of awareness and create more understanding and visibility of driving buses as a good career choice. We clearly have some challenges and issues at the moment with antisocial behaviour, which challenges every gender. That may be a contributing factor, but we haven't yet as an organisation - Jacqui, I'm not sure if you've got anything to help me - got down into the details of what a proactive campaign might look like to change the gender balance. We've been ensuring more that we have a sufficient pipeline of suitably qualified and interested candidates we can train as bus drivers, irrespective of gender. That's the honest answer.

**Mr JAENSCH** - Minister, could you please provide an update on the process for recruitment of a new CEO?

**Mr VINCENT** - Thank you very much. I'm happy to take this opportunity to announce Metro Tasmania has appointed Jessica Payton to the position of chief executive officer, with a starting date of 19 January next year. Ms Payton is a senior transport executive with nearly 20 years' experience in heading up public transport reform. She will join Metro from the Brisbane City Council, where she is currently general manager of strategy and network services, leading a multidisciplinary branch of more than 200 staff and contractors.

Ms Paton's career foundation was built at Queensland Rail, where she held senior roles in operational readiness, training and workforce development. She has also played prominent roles in two of Brisbane's most significant transport projects, the new bus network, which she led the full delivery of, and the metro operational project, in which she oversaw the operational readiness program for Brisbane Metro and transition of Queensland's first zero-emission electric fleet. Her work experience covers strategic network planning, safety and risk, workforce training, network scheduling and event transport operations.

This is an exciting time in Metro's history with a number of key projects. I welcome Ms Paton to the role.

**Ms BUTLER** - There seems to be an assumption from this budget that we're debating in this committee at the moment that the half-price fares have contributed to Metro's significant revenue loss over the last financial year. Looking at your annual report under the 'Notes to the Financial Statements' on page 38, it says:

Ticket fare revenue is recognised when the passenger purchases a trip on a bus route. During June 2024 and the 2024-25 period, Metro's ticket fare revenue was topped up by the Department of State Growth to cover fares not received as a result of the State Government half-price fares initiative. The fare revenue for this top-up is recognised during the period that the bus services were delivered.

How much funding does the Department of State Growth provide to Metro to top up lost revenue due to the half-price fare initiative.

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Can I put that on notice? It's not a gotcha moment, because it's in here.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - I was just looking at Jesse to try to do the calculation. I will come back to you with the number before the close of the meeting.

The policy I was referring to before, the half-price fare effectively notionally means that our revenue is halved subject to any change in the mix of tickets, and the patronage number. So last year, if they had simply topped up the amount of revenue we received 50-50, we would have been \$190,000 better off. In other words, that's the incremental impact on the \$2.7 million. But we'll calculate the number that we were paid last year on that particular policy. This year, as I said, it's different. They are simply matching the revenue that we collect from customers.

**Ms BUTLER** - Okay, so the loss really has nothing to do with the half-price fares?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - It has a \$190,000 impact. Had the policy been administered differently and, look, it's a matter of how DSG interpreted it versus how we might interpreted it.

**Ms BUTLER** - Okay, if I've got that right, has there been any evidence that the half-price fare scheme increased usage at all? I know a lot of people, especially constituents who I deal with, have relied upon it.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - I think there's been a 2.5 per cent increase in patronage this year, but it's hard to isolate. What I can say is that in our most recent customer satisfaction survey, there was certainly a marked increase in customer satisfaction with value for money, but it has not necessarily resulted in the attraction of more people to public transport, not materially more.

**Ms BUTLER** - Okay. Also within your annual report, under the section 'Other Income', there's a grant income of \$8 million, or it's a bit over \$8 million, for 2024-25, and 2023-24, this one is for \$3,000,096. It doesn't say where the \$8 million grant came from. Can you provide that information to the committee?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Well, the grant income comes through DSG, and its various budget allocations that are being made for initiatives that we're delivering in this particular period. I'll get you the detail and the breakdown.

**Ms BUTLER** - I can put that on notice?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - We will give you a breakdown of what that grant income was for, but, in general, it's for projects and things like the software programs that we're working on, HASTUS, and bus security screens, CCTV - there was a partial funding for some CTV, which again we've got more grant for this year - and the hydrogen buses, the electric buses. That's what you will see, and we will get you the breakdown of it.

**Ms BUTLER** - It's interesting because many of those other grant areas were discussed in your financials - it actually specifies what those grants are for, but this one just has 'grant income'. It doesn't have any explanation of it. For some of those other points that you've just raised, that is explained in the financials but that particular \$8 million, it doesn't say that it comes from DSG. It just says 'other grant income'.

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**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - I think you could call it government grant income because -

**Ms BUTLER** - But that's not what your financials say, which have been signed off by an auditor. That's why I'm trying to figure out why it's been documented that way.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - And they have been signed off by an auditor, which means the auditor hasn't sought for us to clarify it.

**Unknown** - Because they are happy with it.

**Ms BUTLER** - Well, not necessarily. We don't know what questions they asked.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Look, in the interest of clarity and transparency, we'll provide you with a full detail of the grants.

**Unknown** - [Inaudible].

**Ms BUTLER** - That's not the process. You know that, minister, sorry.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - In the interest of transparency, we'll provide you the full detail of the grants. I omitted to say the government also supported us with a once-off 10 per cent increase to bus operator wages and the grant income associated with that is also in those numbers for the year.

**Ms BUTLER** - You'll provide that -

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - We will provide that with a breakdown.

**Ms BUTLER** - Thank you very much.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - For our next annual report we will sharpen the wording a little bit to assist you.

**CHAIR** - All right. I want to go back to the theme of Ms Johnston's question. I think the workforce is 85 per cent male presently, so recruitment was deemed to be a problem with driver shortage, safety and so forth and gender balance. Do you think - and this might be a question for the acting CEO - there's an issue around culture within the organisation?

**Mr HANSEN** - Not necessarily culture. I think the nature of our rosters over the years has changed quite a bit. Part-time work is a strong attractor for women, particularly if you design those duties to reflect finish before school finishes in the afternoon. Lock them in with the school time.

**CHAIR** - For that traditional family?

**Mr HANSEN** - Historically that's what has been in place and there were a number of part-time shifts. It's one thing that we've initiated at the management level that I've asked the rostering and planning people to commence looking at what we call 'spread shifts', which is four hours in the morning and four hours in the afternoon and four hours off during the middle

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of the day. Split those into two part-time shifts, and see how we can make those more attractive for potentially women to seek employment.

The other area is that historically we used to have what we called 40-week drivers. Those 40-week drivers took their holidays during the school term the same as a teacher would. The largest cohort working in that particular group were women and it was attractive for childcare during school holidays. Also, during an earlier period we had a situation where we sought exemption from the Anti-Discrimination Commission to exclusively recruit female drivers. We were granted that after a period of time. For a period of two to three years that's what we did. Our cohort of drivers at the time was around 30, 35-40 per cent, we got up to.

**CHAIR** - When was that?

**Mr HANSEN** - The 1990s.

**CHAIR** - So, you're talking about historically?

**Mr HANSEN** - Historically, but there's nothing wrong, or no reason why we can't revisit some of those strategies and policies and see how they work into the future. I've asked people to look at that while I'm here. In terms of culture, there's no doubt that bus operations is a 'blokey' culture - it's referred to as that everywhere. That was one of the reasons why having more women in the workforce, particularly the driving workforce, was fundamentally important, because it -

**CHAIR** - Reduced crime, didn't it?

**Mr HANSEN** - Well, not so much that. It allowed the relationship between the end user and the driver, particularly the student cohort, to be better managed. Less stress. There was a strategy behind all that and it did work at the time, so we got it up. Those sorts of things I've asked people to look at now to see what they might be able to do in the future.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Minister, my questions are about common ticketing. I understand that the current activity is more centred on DSG, but I wanted to understand the journey that we've been on with this one, that you've inherited. I have a couple of specific questions.

Minister, did Metro engage with a company called Cormeum Consulting, who were marketing Cubic as the best company to undertake the common ticketing in Tasmania? If so, what year was that?

**Mr VINCENT** - Thank you, Mr O'Byrne, I will refer that to the Chair.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - We will have to take that question on notice. My understanding is that Cormeum was providing advisory services in some capacity, but it predates my time.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Okay. Follow-up question: did a principal advisor from Cormeum Consulting then become employed at Metro? What year was that, and what role were they in at Metro?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - I will take that question on notice.

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**Mr O'BYRNE** - In 2022-23, Metro Tasmania gave Cormeum Consulting a \$388,000 contract related to the common ticketing project and, in 2023-24, the company received a further contract for \$105,000. Assuming the answer to my questions prior - that I acknowledge you will take on notice that this person was engaged - is Metro satisfied that there was no conflict of interest here?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - As I've indicated previously, to my knowledge, Cormeum Consulting performs advisory work and uses expertise in the field of ticketing. You've described them as a marketing agency for Cubic. I am not aware that they have been appointed as a marketing agency. I know them tangentially from working on another ticketing project. I know them to have some expertise in ticketing systems. I will take the question on notice as to - if I may.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Can I confirm that the minister can take that on notice?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - I will find out what we engaged Cormeum - what their scope was, and I will advise.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - The specific question is, have staff or any consultant from that consulting firm, as a principal, been employed by Metro?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Employed by Metro?

**Mr O'BYRNE** - That's right. Minister, are you agreeing to take that on notice?

**Mr VINCENT** - Certainly, the Chair is, yes.

**Prof RAZAY** - Honourable minister, I'm hoping the Metro Chair and the CEO can solve one of my intriguing mysteries. As we know, transport is a major contributor to air pollution, which is contributing to one of the highest rates of chronic lung diseases in Australia, here in Tasmania. I feel buses can help greatly by reducing carbon pollution emissions. I've been preaching to people to use more buses, but unfortunately, the statistic is not helping. Less than 3 per cent of Tasmanians use buses, and bus use accounts for less than four kilometres travelled as well. I'm trying to say, how can we change that culture? The statistics also show more than half a million vehicles registered in Tasmania - that's an 80 per cent increase since 2008. So, please help me - it's not about price. We even had the free Tiger Bus in Launceston. After 14 years, it stopped in the last month. How can we change that culture and move?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - That's a very big question to ask. If I could be succinct in it, then yes, generally it's been demonstrated that it's not about price. You look in other jurisdictions and it's about the journey that people need to make and the availability of alternative modes, and what it means for them in terms of time. So, it's competitive journey times, it's frequency of service, it's convenience of service, how accessible it is, and time of day.

I would hazard a guess that DSG has studied this particular question in more detail. I know that they have set targets for increased mode share in Hobart and they've put together a plan that, I think, is called Moving Hobart. They may well be able to shine more light on it.

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I'm sorry - you're asking someone who knows about public transport and what drives patronage in public transport and what constrains patronage growth in public transport - the question of the culture is a much bigger question.

**Prof RAZAY** - Are you saying that, unless we have like a complete network that covers all the suburbs within the CBD, with an efficient and frequent service, otherwise, we can't change it? That's, I think, the main thing.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - I wouldn't say you can't change it. I can say there are levers that can be pulled to influence overall usage of public transport, but ultimately those levers are kind of driven by people's customs, people's habits, people's needs.

**CHAIR** - And policy.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Obviously, an allocation of funds to public transport in a constrained environment requires some trade-off decisions to be made, which are policy decisions for those in elected office.

**Mr JAENSCH** - Minister, in an answer to a previous question, the Chair made reference to a customer satisfaction survey. I think it was around value for money or something like that. I'm interested to hear what else you have learnt from your customer satisfaction review, how Metro is seen as a transport of choice?

**Ms BUTLER** - And will you table it? That'd be great.

**Mr JAENSCH** - Well, it's my turn to ask questions at the moment. I will ask the first one first.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Well, the customer satisfaction survey we conduct regularly, annually, but there were a couple of years during COVID that we deferred it.

In the latest survey, overall satisfaction with Metro has increased to 78 per cent compared with 69 per cent the prior year. Highest levels of satisfaction are around the service provided by bus drivers at 86 per cent. Personal safety and satisfaction with service reliability was lower - in other words, late-running buses or cancelled buses, cancelled services.

The survey showed improvements in cost of travel - value for money is now at 91 per cent - and with journey time, which is, as a public transport professional, interesting. So, that is the short of it.

**Mr JAENSCH** - Would that have captured the period with the modified fares?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - That would have captured the period with the modified fares. That would have also captured the period with the service cancellations, temporary service adjustments, call them what you will.

**Mr JAENSCH** - You might see one of those going up and the other coming down in that same period? Compared to - well, if you've got cancellations and lower fares, you could expect to see higher satisfaction with value for money, lower satisfaction with availability of -

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**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Satisfaction with availability of service has returned to its prior level.

**Mr JAENSCH** - Okay.

**Ms BUTLER** - Thank you, Chair. Just in relation to the customer satisfaction survey, would it be possible to table the outcomes of that survey for the committee?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - We can certainly table the outcomes of the latest survey

**Ms BUTLER** - Thank you. Excellent. On the -

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Taking the question on notice, we can't table it here, but we will respond to your question on notice.

**Ms BUTLER** - And to confirm, that's not a part of the review where that consultation closed just recently, is it? That's a different survey.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - That's a different survey.

**Mr JAENSCH** - You've just asked for it to be tabled, so what were you asking?

**Ms BUTLER** - I'm just confirming because there are two surveys at the moment. There's a review that is being undertaken at the moment, but it's all bus, so it's private; and Metro across the state, so, that's a different one. But that community consultation, I believe, closed on 20 June, if that's correct?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - That would have been conducted by the Department for State Growth. We conduct a customer satisfaction survey amongst our customer base.

**Ms BUTLER** - Yes, thank you.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - We will provide on notice a copy of the most recent report and some comparatives for you.

**Ms BUTLER** - Thank you, that's lovely.

On 20 March, bus drivers took industrial action after Metro health and safety reps issued a cease work direction to protect frontline workers. At that stage, they were saying that it was due to the rise in robberies and physical assaults that had created an unacceptable risk to the members. They called on the state government to follow through on its commitment to train and deploy transit officers across the state. It was the former secretary of the RTBU who stated that 'not enough was being done to improve driver safety.' The government promised transit officers two years ago. Is there funding for transit officers' services in the budget, minister?

**Mr VINCENT** - If we can just double-check that. We might come back to that.

**Ms BUTLER** - I can take that question on notice.

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How many transit officers are currently operating on Metro services and are they permanent positions?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - The transit officers are managed by the Department of State Growth. They contract the transit officers, they deploy them on our services, and I think other services -

**Ms BUTLER** - They do, but because this is a Metro - I'm interested in Metro because that's what we're -

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Yes, so in relation to Metro, we have a close working relationship with the contractor, Wilson Security. We gather intelligence on where incidents occur and they deploy in accordance with those incidents to assist with those. We're working closely with them to provide feedback when they're managing incident response. My understanding, without knowing the details, is that government has committed to further support of the transit officers, which I think were initially a trial. We welcome that as we welcome their investment in new CCTV. They've very kindly given us an allocation to retrofit the entire fleet with better CCTV, with live CCTV feeds, right back to our control centre, which will enable us to work more proactively both with Wilson and with police, with whom we also have a good relationship. They have four people based out at the Moonah depot and we work closely with them on incident response and proactive deployment.

**Ms BUTLER** - This might be a better question for me to ask the minister, then. It's in the same topic area. Minister, do you know how many transit officers there currently are, through that DSG contract? How many are on Metro services and are they permanent positions?

**Mr VINCENT** - I will have to take that on notice, thank you.

**Ms BUTLER** - Okay, thank you. Do you -

**CHAIR** - Last question, Ms Butler.

**Ms BUTLER** - see that transit officers are essential to protect frontline workers, minister?

**Mr VINCENT** - Yes, I do. As part of wandering around, if I could put it that way, up and down the bus mall talking to the drivers, I spoke to quite a few of the transit officers and they were training a couple of new guys the day I was there. They were very switched on to the areas they needed to concentrate on where they went. They were very complimentary to the whole way it was operating; the bus drivers liked having them around in some of the routes that had issues. I was amazed by their positive nature towards their role. I was part of a conversation they had with the trainees, where they were heading out to a couple of different areas where there'd been some issues a few days beforehand, to run through very specific techniques and methods they use in those areas. So, I will say yes, certainly under today's circumstances they are essential and will be expanded.

**CHAIR** - My question is about the real-time tracking. Minister, in your opening address, and I think at other times when you had the opportunity, you talked about the success of the real-time tracking. We are inundated in our office by people who catch buses, myself included,

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who don't have any success with the real-time tracking. Quite often buses don't - you're looking askance, Mr Braxton-Smith; I'm surprised that you haven't heard this before.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - No, I - it's just that you are saying that you don't have any success. I actually caught the 205 here this afternoon, and it told me that it was going to run a minute late, and arrive a minute early, and by golly it did.

**CHAIR** - Well, good luck to you, because it's very hit and miss, and I suppose that's part of the problem. Minister, how can you say that this is successful? How do you manage or monitor the success of real-time tracking? Honestly, it's not living up to expectations.

**Mr VINCENT** - I will ask the CEO to come in on this in a second. I've had positive feedback from a lot of the people I've spoken to. I can honestly say that I do not believe I've seen any negative feedback come through in letters to my office at all, and we receive a lot of mail. Talking with various parts of Metro, including the drivers, there seems to be positive feedback. I certainly hadn't heard any response like you've just made about issues with it.

**CHAIR** - I've raised it in the parliament, I don't know how you've not heard it there as well.

**Mr VINCENT** - I'm sorry, I haven't.

**CHAIR** - Honestly, I find this incredible. We will move on unless you have an answer as to how it's surveyed and how -

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - I certainly can give you some context and help you to understand in a bit more detail what is happening. There is a unit that's installed on the bus, the purpose of which is to broadcast the GPS position of the bus in real-time. It sends that information up into the cloud to a provider that is managed by DSG. That provider takes the real-time data, we've matched it to a route, and it then sends it down the pipe to our app and to Google. That is the system architecture in very simple terms.

The way it has been designed, there are some issues, which are known faults or faults that we're discovering. No. 1, the equipment that's installed on the bus sometimes, because of vibration, goes nonfunctional, so then it won't send detail on its position. No. 2, at times there are issues with kind of the predictive algorithm, which I think will be something that could be answered by, potentially there could be issues with the provider. The other issue is that, in the current configuration, we sometimes swap the bus out, so we do a predeparture check on the bus to make sure it's safe for operation, but our data tells us that 85 per cent to 90 per cent of the time -

**CHAIR** - Successful 85 per cent to 90 per cent.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - there is no problem. I would agree there is opportunity for improvement. I would say I can well understand the annoyance with the app but let's be clear, it's nothing like the Bureau of Meteorology app in terms of the issues that it creates -

**CHAIR** - Please. Honestly, I don't find that funny at all.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - In fairness to us, we've spent \$70 000 on our app.

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**CHAIR** - Before I pass to Ms Johnston, this is from a constituent: we don't track a single service from Elizabeth Street and when it does track, there are ghost services that are tracked and are at least five minutes off schedule, just FYI.

**Mr VINCENT** - Chair, before we go to Ms Johnston, I have some details on the budget.

Transit officers funding is contained within public transport services and support line item within table 12.1 on page 239 of Budget Paper 2, volume one, \$2.38 million. The rest of the numbers on the transits we still need to get for you.

**Ms JOHNSTON** - To you, Chair, you're obviously engaging in a heavy recruitment drive, and you are training as many new bus drivers as possible. Are you able to provide the committee with a breakdown of the numbers of drivers trained per year over the last three years and, of those drivers, how many have continued or taken up employment as drivers with Metro remain in employment 12 months after their training?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Over the past three years, I'm going to have to gather more information and take the question on notice. I can say in the year 2023-24, we recruited, trained and put on roster 116 drivers. This financial year, I think, the annual report says 136 drivers. To give you an illustration, in the period February to November, through our training program, we trained, inducted and graduated to our roster 99 drivers. In the same period, 74 drivers departed the organisation.

As indicated before, we have continued to experience high rates of turnover. In our exit surveys, what we find is approximately 40 per cent of the drivers leave for reasons that are not connected with Metro, nothing to do with the job. Another 30 per cent leave because of interstate moves or changes in personal circumstance. The balance is not happy with the work conditions, whether that's antisocial behaviour, hours of work, or just straight out pay, but that's what I can tell you and I will provide you with further detail.

**Ms JOHNSTON** - Are you able to do the breakdown of the retention of drivers who've just been trained? After 12 months how many of those drivers you've trained remain in the position?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - We can provide you with some analysis of that. We will take that question on notice.

**Prof RAZAY** - Minister, the worker compensation claims are increasing dramatically, and working in transport is a major stress for people, especially with, as you say, anti-social behaviour. Do we have figures of compensation claims in our transport department or Metro?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - We will have figures because we do track and pay close attention to workers compensation claims and to injury rates over time. You will see in our annual report - I can't quite remember the term we use - but in terms of key performance targets, we do have lost time injury frequency rates. That is the number of lost time injuries per million hours worked.

In general, what we have seen is, yes, a sharp increase in the period pre-COVID, over the period of the last five years. What's happened over the period of the last five years is that there's been a change in the mix of injuries from predominantly or almost entirely physical injury, to

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psychosocial injury. Psychosocial cause is almost 100 per cent as a result of antisocial behaviour. We have been successful in reducing the overall rate of injury. I'm not going to declare anything near victory here, because we have, pardon the pun, a long road ahead of us. We acknowledge that in terms of dealing with the sources of lost time injury in the workplace, but we are making progress, the numbers are trending down.

If I look briefly at workers compensation claims lodged and we go from March to March in our year, they went from 26 in the period 31 March 2020 to 31 March 2021, up to a peak of 49 in the period 31 March 2023 to 31 March 2024. Last year they reduced to 40 claims and this year we are trending less.

As I say, it would be premature to predict the full year outcome. The pleasing thing is, in all of that, we've also been able to reduce the number of lost time hours. We work hard on trying to get workers back into the workplace, even on modified duties to the extent they're available sooner, because it's better for them and better for the organisation and has been shown to produce better outcomes. It is a key concern for everyone at Metro, because safety is everyone's responsibility.

**Prof RAZAY** - Is safety a major issue for drivers? You have some cities where they are protected in their driving area, you see that in European countries.

**Mr BRAZTON-SMITH** - Certain jurisdictions have screens, and buses are built to provide a separate compartment for drivers. That's not been the case in Australia. We have a program we're now rolling out for bus driver screens; it's been supported and funded by government to the tune of around \$2 million. We are currently deployed on about 70 per cent of our fleet where we have installed the screen. We've had to go through a long consultation process, because we need to ensure that drivers still have adequate lines of visibility for safety purposes whilst they're driving. We're currently deploying those screens and that does deflect the problem, because they're less likely to be subject to assaults. That certainly doesn't stop abusive or aggressive behaviour, or other incidents. It's one of the suites of tools that we're using to try to address antisocial behaviour.

Finally, to give you context, we run about 640,000 bus services a year, and we experience in total including vandalism, assaults, attempted thefts, aggressive behaviour, assault passenger on passenger, amounts to slightly less than 0.1 per cent, of about 600 incidents. It's alarming because that's a 400 per cent increase in Hobart and a 180 per cent increase overall in the last five years. But it's a trend everywhere: in public transport, for retail workers and frontline workers generally, and we are getting the same issues.

**Mr JAENSCH** - Minister, in terms of recovery of passenger numbers on public transport services post-COVID, is the experience in Tasmania similar to what's happening in comparable jurisdictions elsewhere, accepting that Melbourne and Geelong might be different and more comparable to here than elsewhere. What's happening in those jurisdictions to recover patronage post-COVID?

**Mr BRAZTON-SMITH** - If you want to defer to me. There are some interesting studies and, in essence, those jurisdictions that had lockdowns for longer periods are having more challenges in the recovery of patronage. In most jurisdictions there's been an ongoing change in work and study habits which has altered the way people use public transport and move around generally.

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In Sydney, patronage is below its pre-COVID level and, from memory, Adelaide is as well, but beyond that, there are studies and we could get some information for the committee if it was of interest to you.

**Mr JAENSCH** - I'm less interested in that. I'm more interested that when we've had discussions here about revenue changes, different strategies to address the costs and provision of these services and the utilisation of them, there's an underlying pattern across the country that we're part of, isn't there?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Yes, and across the globe.

**Mr JAENSCH** - Yes, and no-one's found the silver bullet yet.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - The secret sauce? No.

**Mr JAENSCH** - Okay, so that's something still out there that we're grappling with.

**Ms BUTLER** - Minister, there's been a lot of talk about which bus provider is going to provide the rapid bus services for the northern transport strategy. I'm also hearing rumours around the department considering bringing in Kinetic to run the services to the Macquarie Point stadium instead of Metro as part of those rapid bus services. What are your thoughts in relation to that? If I am hearing those rumours, is there anything to that?

**Mr VINCENT** - You must move in different circles because I haven't heard those rumours.

**Ms BUTLER** - Can you confirm that it will be Metro that will be providing the rapid bus services to the stadium?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Typically, stadium services require all operators to respond because of the nature of demand. I would expect that both ourselves and Kinetic are operating services, and any other bus operator, because Tasmania will need to move substantial numbers of people by public transport to the stadium on match day, as is the case in Adelaide, Sydney and Perth. All operators will be involved necessarily to provide the capacity that's needed.

**Ms BUTLER** - Will Metro be providing the rapid bus transport services to Macquarie Point stadium and, I suppose, from the Moonah interchange and through that corridor? Who will be providing those services? Will that be Metro or are you going to privatisate that to Kinetic?

**Mr VINCENT** - No, there's no full plan at this stage. That is still being worked through the transport plan for that. I think the chair is quite correct in his assumption with his experience around other stadiums and Australia, that it takes all operators to be able to move that number of people in a short time.

**Ms BUTLER** - So you will rule out privatising the rapid bus services to the stadium?

**Mr VINCENT** - There's probably two things there. Events is one thing. The strategic plan for the rapid buses is still being worked on. Events for a stadium, should it get up, would

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be a separate plan altogether, where the chair has indicated that he believes everybody would need to be involved with those numbers.

**Ms BUTLER** - Will Metro be able to provide the rapid bus services?

**Mr VINCENT** - It comes down to when the event might be with their normal bus timing, but it would be part of the plan.

**Ms BUTLER** - I mean as part of that strategy and the Macquarie Point stadium and that corridor, that will be Metro? That's not going to be privatised?

**Mr VINCENT** - I have heard nothing along those lines.

**Ms BUTLER** - Okay. Will there need to be legislative change to introduce P2 bus lanes?

**Mr VINCENT** - Sorry, I haven't had that discussion at this point in time.

**Ms BUTLER** - Okay, can I put that on notice? I understand there could be a deficiency in the current laws for us to be able to introduce those. Also, is the geography available to instal P2 bus lanes as part of the rapid bus strategy going to Macquarie Point stadium?

**Mr VINCENT** - I haven't seen that in the strategic plan at this stage but that's still being worked on. I know the whole northern corridor is looking at the capacity of the three parts of the corridor, which is the rail line, the highway and the main road as all parts of the solution, so what is being looked at there is quite broad.

**Ms BUTLER** - Because there's really not much geography -

**CHAIR** - Ms Butler, it's time to move on. I have the call.

Minister, what's your understanding of rapid buses? Are they a specific type of bus?

**Mr VINCENT** - I just want to point out, Chair, that the rapid bus network is a project of the DSG, not Metro. The buses that are being considered are a different type of bus.

**CHAIR** - Okay, so you'd have a different type of bus and it wouldn't be suitable to have a Metro bus as it's configured now to go on there.

**Mr VINCENT** - I will ask the chair to expand on that, please.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Based on my experience, the definition of bus rapid transit takes a number of forms: dedicated corridor; on-road corridor; or simply an express or semi-express service. Sometimes, as we did in Sydney, we go with a dedicated fleet, the B-line, but it was on-road and didn't operate on any other services. For a period of time there were others that were termed metro buses, which were rapid bus services on road and could perform any service.

We haven't had any engagement with DSG yet because they're in the planning phase, but I anticipate that at a certain time they will want to understand their options as to how they

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deliver that service. Our new chief executive has had a lot of experience in that, coming from Brisbane, where they've spent a lot of time developing and delivering bus rapid transit.

**CHAIR** - What's the current bus usage across southern Tasmania? What's the percentage of people using public transport, not including ferries?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - That data will be held by DSG; it's not gathered by us. You're asking about the percentage of mode share, or are you talking about the number of people who travel on buses?

**CHAIR** - Tell me how many people travel on buses in the southern area, if you wouldn't mind.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Okay. On our services we have somewhere in the annual report, I think, a breakdown by geography. I refer you to page 16 of the annual report showing boardings in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie separately. It shows 79 per cent of our total patronage is in Hobart, so on a quick calculation that would be 5.6 million trips, but that's trips, not people.

**CHAIR** - Yes, and it's too difficult to work that out. The modal shift in the stadium proposal puts a lot of emphasis on bus transport. At the moment we have a relatively low uptake of bus transport, would you agree?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Comparatively to South Australia and Queensland?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Compared to any other capital city, the percentage of journeys from to work to CBD is low.

**CHAIR** - How do you envisage that sort of change to get people on buses, for the stadium or otherwise? How would we improve that?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - That's probably for DSG to advise on, but my understanding is that DSG has put forward a plan called Moving Hobart that contemplates a bus rapid transit network. In general, the strategy that's adopted in any other city for game day is they put on a BRT network and it's all hands on deck to provide the capacity service frequency along the corridors that is needed.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. I don't think that really goes to the heart of my question, but we will move to Ms Johnston.

**Ms JOHNSTON** - Thank you, Chair. I might keep going on that line of questioning, regarding all hands on deck for events at a stadium. The government has indicated that an additional 80 buses would be required for major events at the stadium. I think in a previous answer to Ms Butler, you mentioned that all services, so Metro, Kinetic, and other private operators, will be needed to provide that particular service. Has Metro turned its mind to how many buses they would have available for a major event day? How they would resource the drivers given that we don't have enough buses and drivers at the moment to run our basic public transport system for necessary trips to school and work and doctors and hospitals and all those

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kind of things, employment, let alone for an event day? Where are you finding these drivers and buses?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - We have not yet commenced the detailed planning. To be candid, I personally don't even know the date that the stadium will be open, but I imagine that as we go into the next phase, we will be doing a lot of more detailed planning and working collaboration with DSG. Our new chief executive hails from Brisbane, where she has been intimately involved in the planning of the game day arrangements for the Olympics and currently has responsibility for event transport for the greater Brisbane area. So, we're hiring someone with the relevant skills and capability so that we can step up to the plate and provide detailed advice.

**Ms JOHNSTON** - I don't want to put words into your mouth, but are you suggesting that you haven't been consulted by the government or MPDC in the development of their transport plan around how many buses and whether that's something that you could actually meet? In conjunction with other service providers, I recognise that. But, have you had any consultation from MPDC or government in relation to the transport needs, particularly, the bus needs for major events? Has Metro been asked to provide input into that at all?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - We provided high level input.

**Ms JOHNSTON** - But haven't modelled what that would look like, whether you could actually do it?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - The modelling is very preliminary. I imagine that they have a strategic - well, it is the Department of State Growth that would have a strategic transport model and they would be doing the modelling. That's not within our ability.

**Ms JOHNSTON** - But they don't know if they can actually have the drivers?

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Thank you, Chair. Through you, minister, to the chair. It's no secret that Metro has had some industrial issues over the last few years. In last year's hearing, I raised a question about the use of consultancies in that regard, in HR. In last year's report, there was a payment to Adaptable HR for the tune of \$138,000. That was, as I understand it, based on my memory from questions, over a five-month period and the key person in that company was a person who received a significant payout, a former employee of Metro. Looking at this year's consultancies, Adaptable HR has received a further, let's see, \$142,600, so \$143,000.

You've also used a number of legal companies there, two of which, I think, focus very much on industrial relations: Edge Legal for \$221,000 and Page Seager for \$141,000. My understanding is that the bulk of that has gone to HR and industrial relations work. You're spending a lot of money on external consultants, trying to manage your industrial relations. Do you think that's value for money?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - First, to clarify, the money that was spent on consultants in relation to the renegotiation of the enterprise agreements, plural, is - we engaged Adaptable HR and we engaged Edge Legal. Those are the two parties. To clarify, Page Seager provided us advice on other matters, not industrial matters.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Thank you.

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**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - To give you context, we had three industrial relations agreements that were coming up in short order and they covered everyone in our workforce bar the management, so close to 500 employees and a payroll of approximately \$40 million. Those employees were seeking increases and improvements to pay and conditions. We needed to secure changes to enterprise agreements that would enable us to introduce efficiencies that other bus operators enjoy in interstate jurisdictions and to be able to make full use and get full benefit of the investments that government is making in the new software on the network.

In short, and to put it in context, \$40 million per annum, is what we spend on wages. In an environment where we were negotiating the reset of terms of each of those agreements, we spent \$400,000 in its entirety on external advice and guidance that helped us to secure new agreements, less than or about 0.1 per cent of one year's payroll. We've secured terms that are better for our employees and give them not everything they want, because no-one gets everything they want, but get them far more than they had and give the organisation the opportunity to deliver efficiencies and better use of Tasmanian taxpayers' money.

And, if I can just clarify, while I'm on it, you made an assertion earlier that there was a payout for an employee of Adaptable HR. We had engaged, for a short period of time, an employee of Adaptable HR as our chief operating officer. She was remunerated in accordance with her executive contract. There was no payout. She left. She stepped out of Adaptable HR to perform duties for us on an agreed contract of employment and she left at the conclusion of that term.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - I think previous reports differ, and I appreciate the detail -

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - With the exception of her leave entitlements. That was the payout.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Yes, okay,

**Unknown** - That's entitlements; you have to look after people's entitlements.

**Mr O'BYRNE** - Well, there's annual leave and sick leave, but there's a whole range of other things that, if you - anyway. We can get into the reeds on that.

I appreciate the detailed answer in terms of the \$400,000 expenditure. What you omitted to refer to is your existing standing HR and industrial relations capacity. You have people internally, and most GBEs and SOCs have an internal resource to manage these things. My question about the extent of the external advice - surely you have an internal capacity to manage these things from time to time - is spending \$400,000 justified in terms of the bit that you omitted, your existing standing resource and the role of your CEO, to fix these things?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - We have a small team. It is a small team and, at the time, there were a couple of key positions who were new to the organisation, the chief operating officer and the general manager of human resources. Our assessment was that it was important to have someone to assist both of those parties and we had a vacancy in our IR manager role, if I'm not mistaken, which was not filled at the time. We've since been able to fill that role. We are not anticipating needing to put that level of resource to it at this time, at this next turn, but through force of circumstance, this was the kind of business judgment that was exercised as to

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how to best deal with the negotiation of our enterprise agreements. What you're seeing in front of you is the financial consequence of those decisions.

**CHAIR** - Mr Jaensch, you have been waiting very patiently.

**Mr JAENSCH** - Thank you very much, Chair, I've been trying my hardest.

Minister, the Tasmanian government has provided Metro with \$1.6 million to upgrade its CCTV technology. What benefits will this deliver for Metro and its passengers?

**Mr VINCENT** - Thank you for the question. It was quite interesting, going in totally new to this portfolio and understanding the difference in the buses and the different systems that were already in place. Some of them were getting past their serviceable life and no longer had capacity to be as active as they need to be. Technology has changed a lot with cameras as well and also, the positioning of cameras and how you can feed live, and we all felt that it was very important that this happened as quickly as possible.

**Mr JAENSCH** - Feed live as opposed to record?

**Mr VINCENT** - The replacement of the whole fleet first up and to make sure that it had live feedback, so the drivers could utilise that; for instance, the police or transit officers could be informed of something that was actually in a live situation and see if they could respond. It was going to be an awkward process of changing it all around, so this money allowed for this to happen a lot quicker, to give drivers, staff and administration a comfort level that they wouldn't have had if it had of been spread out over several years.

**Mr JAENSCH** - And, predominantly, internal to the vehicles, monitoring and covering passengers and that space that they're in, as opposed to dash-cam type - what else is happening around the -

**Mr VINCENT** - I will check with the CEO on the cameras and how many there are on each bus and what they are covering.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - In the current solution there are eight CCTV cameras on the bus which are pointed internally. Currently with the legacy system, the bus has to return to the depot before you can download the CCTV. The new system we're in the process of procurement, but we have specified the capacity to live stream so that we can give those who have authority eyes on capacity.

**Mr JAENSCH** - Does that mean the driver can activate the live -

**CHAIR** - Mr Jaensch, we will move on. Ms Butler.

**Mr JAENSCH** - Some people get three or four questions on their turn, Chair.

**CHAIR** - Well, you're special.

**Ms BUTLER** - Why are there no bus services to Brighton on a Sunday? That would be the 521 and the X21. It's a high-growth area. I know there's a petition circulating at the moment because the community require it, but there is no bus service to Brighton on a Sunday.

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**Mr HANSEN** - I believe that the timetable scheduled for May will include a Sunday timetable from Brighton.

**Ms BUTLER** - So just one service?

**Mr HANSEN** - I think there's two but I'm not 100 per cent sure. There are definitely Sunday services coming out of Brighton on 14 May.

**Ms BUTLER** - That will be a big relief, that's great news. Thank you very much for that. I will ask a question around the common ticketing system, and we've learnt that the price of that's gone from \$7 million to \$65 million. Minister, one of those square readers only costs \$65, so I don't understand why this has blown out to be a million times that.

**Mr VINCENT** - That project is with DSG at the moment and I haven't seen the details on the -

**Ms BUTLER** - But they're going on Metro buses.

**Mr VINCENT** - They're going on Metro, they're going on everything, but it's not at a place where it comes through at this stage. The trial is about to happen with it. We have taken into consideration with Metro, even with the driver screens, that the opening in the screens is large enough to also place the readers.

**Ms BUTLER** - It's a huge escalation, though. I'm only smiling because I think it's ridiculous to go from \$7 million to \$65 million, especially when the squares cost \$65.

**Mr VINCENT** - It's a lot more complex than that, sorry.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - You've raised the question of square readers. Let me briefly explain why a square reader won't work on a bus.

**Ms BUTLER** - But this is a million times more - that's my point.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - A square reader will not work on a bus.

**Ms BUTLER** - It's a million times more. A square reader that people use in their shops and so forth costs about \$65. There was an initial budget estimate that this would cost \$7 million and it's now at \$65 million; that is a huge escalation in cost.

**Mr JAENSCH** - In the DSG portfolio.

**Ms BUTLER** - If Mr Jaensch thinks that's acceptable, that kind of reflects on how well your government's going on the economics at the moment, doesn't it?

**Mr JAENSCH** interjecting.

**Ms BUTLER** - He's interrupting me on my questioning, Chair.

**CHAIR** - Please go ahead, Ms Butler, unless minister, you have an answer.

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**Mr JAENSCH** - He said DSG before.

**Ms BUTLER** - Mr Jaensch obviously didn't like my question so he's trying to provide some covering fire, but I would love an answer, thank you, minister.

**Mr VINCENT** - Part of that money overall for the common ticketing is for years in advance where they've budgeted for that, so it's not the full amount. I'm not familiar with what the \$7 million was for originally. I have heard of the \$30 million approximately, plus the other part of it which is the extended servicing and supply of the service, but at this point in time it's still with DSG to be finalised.

**Ms BUTLER** - Okay, but that's quite a big escalation. The people of Brighton are going to be really pleased -

**Mr VINCENT** - I do agree with the escalation.

**Ms BUTLER** - that they will be getting the Sunday services, I think that's brilliant. I have one more question just because it's on my round, if that's okay, Chair?

**Mr JAENSCH** - I only had one at all, and you got a third or fourth one.

**CHAIR** - Go on, Ms Butler.

**Mr JAENSCH** - She doesn't even have one ready. I have heaps.

**Ms BUTLER** - I certainly do, I'm just trying to figure this out. Could you run us through any changes Metro has taken on board after the Tasmanian Association of State Schools Organisation submission? There was information provided to them around how school students are having some difficulties with Metro services. Could you provide some information on feedback that Metro has to that submission?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - We will have to take that question on notice.

**Ms BUTLER** - Okay. I will come back to that in my next round if I get another one.

**CHAIR** - Earlier this year I attended the launch of the three hydrogen electric buses in Hobart. While I welcome the government's willingness to experiment with green hydrogen, Metro's annual report states that the earlier electric bus trial in Launceston cost \$6 million, whereas the hydrogen bus trial cost \$11.3 million. It is different technology, I understand that, but have the trials told you whether hydrogen power or electric buses are better suited to Metro's operations?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - The purpose of the trials is to determine what the long-term -

**CHAIR** - Yes, I guess it is.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - So the jury is still out.

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**CHAIR** - What's the next stage of procuring any new vehicles? There are electric buses being used in other jurisdictions in Australia. When are we going to get a fleet of electric buses in Tasmania?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - That's yet to be determined. We are required to produce a report at the conclusion of the trial which assesses how the trial has gone. At that time we will be providing advice and input to DSG as to what the options are and what the issues, challenges and timelines are likely to be in relation to a conversion to either zero-emission technologies or some mix of them. Yes, they are in rollouts in other jurisdictions. Other jurisdictions are having their own challenges, as are we, and most jurisdictions are looking at sometime between now and 2040 or 2050 to make the transition.

I would anticipate that because of the life of an existing bus, it will take a period of time to transition the entire fleet but in essence, that will be a policy decision for government, and it will require not only buses but supporting infrastructure. In the case of hydrogen, as we've learnt, you need to spend a lot of money on the refuelling facility, which is the reason for the \$11.8 million. In the case of electricity, you also need to invest substantially in providing the additional capacity to support an entire fleet for recharging.

**CHAIR** - Following on from Professor Razay's earlier question in relation to clean air, getting people on buses is one thing, so mass transit is one thing, moving to clean energy solutions is another. With the current fuel that you use, do you know if it is coming from Russian fuel sources?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - I have no knowledge of the original source of the crude oil that's been refined, but -

**CHAIR** - We could all throw our hands up in concern about that or not knowing, but perhaps you could take it on notice and find out whether it's coming from Russia or a third country?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Our fuel would be coming from someone that supplies diesel. We will advise you as to our supplier of diesel.

**Prof RAZAY** - To follow on that, we hear that hydrogen and electric buses are expensive and we have fewer Tasmanians using buses. Is there a case from an economic point of view to use minibuses? They are more practical, less expensive, better for our clean air and I think there is a case when you don't have many passengers on your buses.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - It's an interesting question. We haven't done the work to determine if there might be a case for a different-sized bus. It will depend on the peak capacity that you need, not the average capacity. Whereas sometimes you might need a smaller capacity bus, you don't want to put yourself in a position where you cannot meet the peak or meet the growth over a period of 25 years, which is the period that you have that asset for. So, it's not an easy question to answer.

**Mr VINCENT** - In some cases, because they are in more outlying areas, there is talk about using smaller buses to run back into a central location that would feed into the Metro or to the private operator working. It is under consideration, but that's mainly in regional areas or outlying areas of Greater Hobart.

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**Ms JOHNSTON** - I want to go back to providing buses for the stadium for the major events, just to be really clear. It was a bit unclear with your answer beforehand about what exactly Metro has been consulted on in terms of your capacity to provide additional bus services and drivers for major events without impacting on your existing, normal services. Did you have discussions and input into what the conditions for the stadium might be? Have you had those discussions at all? Also, have you done any modelling about whether you can actually provide the additional drivers required for an additional major event and fleet without impacting on your existing services?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - I think the answer to your questions would be yes, at a high level. We have had preliminary conversations - I've had them with the secretary of the department - and no to the rest.

**Ms JOHNSTON** - That high-level discussion - was it just a conversation? How have you assured yourself you can actually meet the requirements that will be needed to be met for conditions for the stadium to provide those services?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - The secretary attended a board meeting and, during the course of the conversation at the board meeting, we had the conversation about the stadium and match day services, and how we might prepare for that and assist in preparing for that. We've not had any further. We've not had any further engagement.

**Ms JOHNSTON** - This is the DSG secretary, so Craig Limkin?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Craig Limkin.

**Ms JOHNSTON** - Thank you.

**Mr JAENSCH** - Could you please tell me what the uptake was like during Seniors Week for the special promotion for free travel with Metro during Seniors Week?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - We will have to take that question on notice but, generally, well received.

**Mr JAENSCH** - Well received? Good.

**Ms BUTLER** - The Rail, Tram, and Bus Union (RTBU) have very recently released a report into clean bathrooms and rest facility areas, focusing on female bus drivers.

**Mr JAENSCH** - Train?

**Ms BUTLER** - Train and bus, yes. It's my understanding that - does Metro provide exclusive rest-stop areas and toilet areas for their drivers along certain routes?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - We do. We have end-of-route facilities and facilities in the depots.

**Ms BUTLER** - How many of them do you have?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - I will need to take that question on notice.

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**Ms BUTLER** - Okay, so I can put that on notice.

Have you had any feedback from - because I've had feedback from Metro staff that a lot of the time, especially when they're out on their routes, there isn't anywhere for them to stop to go to the bathroom. When they get to certain areas they have to use public facilities. That could be an issue, especially when you're trying to recruit more Metro drivers.

Another question: are Metro drivers required to clean their buses at the end of a shift?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - To answer the first question, in relation to Metro employees - I saw the article, as you saw the article, and it did result in me seeking further information from my team today. I have asked them to do further work. To answer your question, of course we would support having the appropriate facilities for our employees in the right places for them. We have a consultative committee which deals with all health and safety matters, and we have a wellbeing program. We've not yet heard anything in particular about any issues. I inquired this morning. None have been raised in the consultative committee, but I have asked our team if they will go back to the consultative committee and put it on the table. I'm interested, so any information you have that you'd care to share, please do.

**Ms BUTLER** - I've had a number of drivers -

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Alternatively, if you could encourage people who've talked to you to talk to their delegate, who's their health and safety representative, they will probably get further, in terms of getting their issues addressed -

**Ms BUTLER** - Thank you, but can I put it on -

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - than they will putting it to you to ask me in scrutiny.

**Ms BUTLER** - Chair, stop talking over top of me, please. I'm sorry. Please.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - I was just finishing the answer.

**CHAIR** - Go ahead, Ms Butler.

**Ms BUTLER** - Yes, but if I've had that information provided to me over a number of years, about there not being rest areas and toilet areas for Metro bus drivers. Could I put that on notice, please?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - As in - what are you putting on notice?

**Ms BUTLER** - Well, the question I'd put on notice would be how many toilet areas there are that are dedicated for Metro drivers, in Metro areas that they service? Also, if information could be provided on when this has been raised with Metro before, because I believe it's been raised on a number of occasions.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Okay, I will take the question on notice. Chair, there was another question there. Do you want me to answer it?

**CHAIR** - Yes.

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**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Briefly, in terms of cleaning, we have a cleaning contractor and the cleaning contractor performs regular cleaning services, including top-up of soap and sanitiser.

**Ms BUTLER** - Okay. So, when a bus is -

**CHAIR** - Ms Butler -

**Ms BUTLER** - It's on the same area.

**CHAIR** - Yes, final question, Ms Butler.

**Ms BUTLER** - At the end of a shift, when the bus driver finishes their shift, are they required to clean that bus when they end their shift? No, they're not? Okay, thank you.

**CHAIR** - Through you, minister, to the Chair or to the acting CEO - it'd be nice to hear from you. The patronage of 7.04 million first boarding shows a modest market response to half-price fares, possibly. We probably don't know what that is in 2024-25 with patronage up by 2.5 per cent, but the increase should have been much larger, around 15 per cent of passengers - 850,000 passengers are missing, if you base this on worldwide patronage responses in lower fares. I'm curious to know - you do have strange expressions sometimes when I'm asking a question.

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - I don't have a good poker face. I was wondering what research you're referring to, because I've read research about the response to half-price or zero fares, and it differs by jurisdiction. I'm not aware of a piece of research that says there's a global average response.

**CHAIR** - No, I'm not suggesting that, actually. I'm saying that possibly it might be relating to half-price fares. Regardless, post-COVID you'd expect that there would have been an increase, and I think you even referred to that yourself, Mr Braxton-Smith. What do you put it down to, as to the reasons why bus patronage isn't picking up?

By the way, I did have somebody contact me since we've been in this hearing to say they, too, have had problems with the real-time tracking. I'd ask you also to table the information that you're getting from patrons and your advice around real-time tracking, please, if you wouldn't mind?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Okay, we will take on notice the question to provide information that we receive in terms of complaints in relation to the real-time app, and for balance, we will provide you any compliments that we've received, if that's okay. Sorry, what was your other question?

**CHAIR** - The question was around patronage and what are your reasons as to why patronage has not improved post-COVID?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - That's a difficult one to answer. There's been a change in societal travel habits, is the short answer. It varies by jurisdiction, but it's common worldwide.

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**CHAIR** - It would be interesting to hear what your incoming CEO has to say about \$0.50 fares because they're hugely popular in Queensland, by the sounds of it, so it'd be interesting to hear about those.

**Prof RAZAY** - One way to attract more people to use buses is to make it easy to pay. There have been changes to make it easy, you can use your phone or card. What's Metro planning in the future?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Making it easy to pay is one of the purposes of the new common ticketing system, which is to be delivered by the Department of State Growth. The experience in other jurisdictions would be that it reduces what's known as friction in the system and particularly encourages occasional use, because you can use a credit card or debit card.

**Ms JOHNSTON** - Chair, I've had a number of constituents raise concerns about the location of bus stops, in terms of antisocial behaviour, the appropriateness, the width, the path, safety reasons, the frequency of people standing there - a whole range of issues. Who's responsible for the maintenance of bus stops and the locations? How do residents who are concerned about this, or public transport users who are concerned about the location, advocate for changes in location to a bus stop?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - In general, it's either the state government or a local government that is responsible for the infrastructure and the kerbside. It depends upon the classification of the road. If there are concerns in relation to the location or condition of a stop, that would be the first port of call for a constituent.

**Ms JOHNSTON** - For the location, not just for the - I get passed from the government department back to Metro, Metro back to the department. So, you're telling me that it's the government that is responsible for it; the government will tell me that Metro determines where their bus stops go.

**Mr VINCENT** - My understanding is it's DSG, but I will clarify that and come back to you.

**Ms JOHNSTON** - Thank you.

**Mr JAENSCH** - Minister, could you please update the committee on Metro's accessibility and inclusion plan and actions currently underway or progressed so far?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Yes, we do have an accessibility and inclusion action plan, the purpose of which is to strengthen access, safety and inclusion for all passengers. In broad terms, our buses are all 100 per cent accessible buses, our digital assets comply with what are known as WCAG Guidelines 2.0, so Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

In terms of the progress, one of the particular focuses of action for us is on mobility devices and mobility aid procedures, because mobility devices in general are getting larger and heavier. We're enhancing the accessibility and providing staff with training.

**Mr JAENSCH** - That's wheelchairs and mobility scooters, is that what you're -

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Wheelchairs and particularly mobility scooters.

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**Ms BUTLER** - In 2018, it was reported Tasmania has the oldest fleet in Australia. Metro announced 100 new replacement buses and that is aside from the introduction of the three hydrogen buses of \$11 million, and I will go back to that. What is the average age of a Metro bus in Tasmania? How does this compare to other states' metro systems, and do we still have the oldest fleet in Australia?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - Our current fleet age is 10.4 years, which is what you would expect for the fleet age average. The fleet age is, I think - in my knowledge, but we will get data as data is available - but, to my knowledge, that would be now comparable with other jurisdictions or better than some.

**Ms BUTLER** - Can I put it on notice?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - I will see what I can obtain, particularly from other jurisdictions that are on the public record.

**Mr JAENSCH** - Would there be a difference between Metro's though, and our overall bus fleet, which includes things like school buses and the rest?

**Mr BRAXTON-SMITH** - It could be, but I can only answer for Metro's bus fleet. Metro's contract provides for us to have a fleet of - any bus must be 21 years or less in service. If we extend the life of some buses as we have, they can be extended by annual approval by DSG up to the age of 25, which is pretty consistent with industry standards elsewhere. In general, our fleet is not as intensively [inaudible] as some other jurisdictions.

**Ms BUTLER** - Is Metro looking to - sorry, I should get that confirmed if I can put that on notice for you? That's lovely, thank you.

If Metro is looking at introducing digital screens in the buses, like most of the other states have - which is really helpful for people who have disabilities, people who may be hearing impaired and so forth - is that an investment on accessibility transport that Metro is considering at the moment?

**CHAIR** - The time for scrutiny, unfortunately, has now expired.

I'd like to thank everybody for their attendance; thank you, minister; thank you, acting CEO, Chair and everybody there; and thank you, committee.

We can stop the broadcast. We will go directly into Tasracing, in a moment.

**The witnesses withdrew.**

**The committee suspended from 5.00 p.m. to 5.03 p.m.**