



# **HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

## **PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE**

### **PORT RIVER EXPRESSWAY—STAGES 2 & 3**

Kingston Room, Old Parliament House, Adelaide

Wednesday 8 June 2005 at 10.40 a.m.

(OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT)

**PARLIAMENT OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

MEMBERS:

Mr P. Caica MP (Presiding Member)

Mr M.K. Brindal MP

Ms V. Ciccarello MP

Mr T. Koutsantonis MP

Mr I.H. Venning MP

WITNESSES:

DAVID MARCHANT, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Rail Track Corporation, PO Box 10343 Gouger Street, Adelaide 5000; STEVE SHEARER, Executive Director, South Australian Road Transport Association, PO Box 2420, Regency Park 5942; HARRY WIERDA, City Manager, and WALLY IAISIELLO, Director, Technical Services, both of Port Adelaide Enfield Council, PO Box 110, Port Adelaide 5015; JOHN FOTHERINGHAM, Managing Director, and SHARON HANLON, General Manager, Public Affairs, both of Royal Automobile Association, 101 Richmond Road, Mile End 5031; ROB TAVERNER, Manager, Supply Chain and Assets, ABB Grain Ltd, 124 South Terrace, Adelaide 5000; JEFF ARNEY, Member, Grains Council, and CAROL VINCENT, General Manager, both of South Australian Farmers Federation, PO Box 6014 Halifax Street, Adelaide 5000; NEIL MURPHY, General Manager, South Australian Freight Council, 296 St Vincent Street, Port Adelaide 5015; CARL KAVINA, General Manager, Marine Operations, Flinders Ports, 296 Flinders Street, Port Adelaide 5015; and TODD BROWN, Chief Executive Officer, Urban Construct, Level 2, 60 Hindmarsh Square, Adelaide 5000, called and examined:

345 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: Welcome and thank you for appearing before the Public Works Committee today. Before proceedings begin, please note that this hearing is a lawful function of parliament and as such warrants the same respect which parliament itself demands. Sections 28 and 31 of the Parliamentary Committees Act outline the privileges, immunities and powers of the committee. In most instances, the hearing is open to the public. Evidence given will be recorded and made publicly available after witnesses have had the opportunity to check the transcript for accuracy. If you believe that there are any reasons of justifiable confidentiality, you may request the committee to hear part or all of your evidence in camera. I will start proceedings today by asking each of you in turn to introduce yourself, including your job title, and then summarise your organisation's view about the proposed

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opening road and rail bridges over the Port River. Committee members may then ask questions in order to seek relevant additional information.

MR BROWN: My name is Todd Brown, and I am the CEO of Urban Construct, which is a joint venture partner and the developer of Newport Quays, which is the redevelopment of the inner harbour at Port Adelaide. Our position is that we are very strongly in favour of opening bridges. We believe they will re-activate the inner harbour and enable us to get the Tall Ships in, as well as other very significant pleasure craft, which are absolutely critical to our development down there. In relation to the development, it was always envisaged that they would be opening bridges. A significant marina facility is envisaged in the inner harbour as well, which makes it even more critical. The development as a whole is \$1.5 billion in value and, as I have previously stated, we have been very firm and foremost in our opinions on this since day one.

MR KAVINA: My name is Carl Kavina. I am the General Manager of Marine Operations, and I represent Flinders Ports. Flinders Ports' preference is to have closed bridges. However, the organisation is not opposed to opening bridges provided there is no delay to freight being transported to and from Outer Harbor. It is our opinion that, when the bridges are opened to facilitate recreation and water-borne traffic, delays to freight will occur, adding to the time criticality of the logistics chain which will ultimately affect ships loading cargo.

Some of the other reasons to support our view are as follows. With the current climate of 'Global Terrorism' and the adoption of the International Ship Port Security Code by the IMO, which resulted in Australia proclaiming the Maritime Security Act in 2003, no commercial vessels will be able to dock in the inner harbour, that is, the area south of the bridges, without extensive security plans and measures being adopted. If the area is to be used to dock commercial vessels, Inner Harbor would need to be fenced and security guards would need to be employed to control access. It is our understanding that the Navy has suggested that, due to the close proximity to housing and the lack of security, they would be reluctant to use the inner harbour. Having a multi-million dollar, operationally-ready vessel reliant on bridges to open again complicates the situation for them.

Operationally, there are significant risks in taking ships through the bridges. Flinders Ports is the only organisation that has state-licensed pilots, and to take a reasonable-sized ship through two 30 metre opening spans will be expensive, as tugs will need to be employed. Taking ships through the span has inherent risks and the consequences if an incident occurred would be catastrophic. All the pilots will need extensive training to manoeuvre ships through two opening spans, which is not done in South Australia at the

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present moment. Flinders Ports' pilots indemnification under the Harbors and Navigation Act of 1993 will need to be extended to include the inner harbour before commercially-piloted ships can be taken through the opening bridges.

MS VINCENT: I am Carol Vincent, General Manager of the South Australian Farmers Federation. The South Australian Farmers Federation is supportive of any development that will help bring sustainability and viability to our industry's export growth. We believe that, for the South Australian agricultural sector to be successful as a competitor on world markets, we need world competitive infrastructure to be able to make that beginning jump. So, we see the bridges as a positive move for the growth of our industry and would certainly want to make sure that there was nothing negative that might impact on the sustainability of our industry for the future.

MR ARNEY: I am Jeff Arney, past chairman of the Deep Sea Port Committee that was involved in the development of the project for identifying a deep water port east of Spencer Gulf. The decision was to support Outer Harbor. Grains Council policy has been not to support opening bridges. I guess the reasoning for it in the past (we have not reaffirmed that policy recently) is that should a malfunction or damage occur to the bridges that would be untenable for export industries. The cost issues are a government issue and I think the government needs to deal with that and be very responsible about the way it invests into the future of South Australia, and we appreciate the support the government has given for the deep water port and the provision of infrastructure for that.

If there was a malfunction, or if damage occurred to the bridge, I think an alternate route for transport for trade to the peninsula would be just about impossible to achieve, with the increased urban activity there as well. Our industry is a 'just in time' industry and we need to have exports that are linked to land movement of grain from storage terminals inland to feed into that port so it is going to be critical that, if opening of those bridges were to occur, that the half-hour commitment morning and evening for that opening would be strictly followed. If a lot of grain was being moved to port and greater than half an hour delays were part of that scenario, the backlog of transport and traffic on the road network would, I think, prove pretty difficult to accommodate as well. It is a government issue as to the investment that they make for opening or fixed bridges; however, I think the difficulties really need to be considered very carefully in terms of cost and if there was malfunction or damage to those structures.

MR TAVERNER: I am Rob Taverner from ABB Grain. Peter Ryan, Chief Financial Officer, is also present today. ABB Grain merged with AusBulk less than 12 months ago. We will be the owner/operator of the new grain terminal at Outer Harbor. What has

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always been of paramount importance to ABB Grain and AusBulk is that there be an efficient transport system to Outer Harbor to support infrastructure developments that are occurring there. We believe that the benefits that will come from the grain terminal and the wharf with the channel deepening won't be gained unless there is supporting high-quality transport infrastructure.

We have major concerns with the existing rail infrastructure that services Outer Harbor. We believe that the new bridges and the upgrades to the Le Fevre Peninsula rail corridor and Pelican Point Road will make a dramatic improvement to the transport system down there. It is important that the government has made a commitment to the bridges following a long period of deliberation. We also think it is important that the decision was made not to put a toll on the bridges, because we felt that would not necessarily have been reflected to all the parties who would gain the benefits. We believe that we now have a more certain environment within which we can progress the developments.

We reiterate the comments of Jeff and Carol that, ultimately, whether to have opening or fixed bridges is a government decision. We have raised our concerns with the government that opening bridges bring with them the risk of jamming in the open position. If they were to jam open for any significant period of time, that would result in a cost to the grain industry, ourselves and exporters of grain through things such as demurrage on vessels, additional road freight costs and additional labour costs. In the normal course of events with two 30 minute openings per day (as has been proposed) we believe they should not cause significant delays to vessel loading. If they were to become longer or more frequent it would become an issue.

MR MURPHY: I am Neil Murphy, General Manager, South Australian Freight Council. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to attend today and state the case for close bridges. The Freight Council has been quite vocal regarding the Port River Expressway bridges and our reasons for having opening structures. We have stated on several occasions that the bridges should be fixed structures for the following reasons, the first of which is: cost in an environment of scarce resources, with over \$100 million extra for construction and operating costs that could be applied to other worthy infrastructure needs (not only transport related but schools and hospitals as well as road and rail). Delays will be caused when the bridges are open, impacting both road and rail freight as well as commuter traffic. If the delay is extended then traffic will divert to other routes, thus increasing costs. The Navy will not visit Inner Harbor for security reasons as well as difficulties with refuelling vessels within close proximity to housing. If the Navy did visit Inner Harbor you would see fences around the tourist precinct that is being created which would effectively keep tourists out.

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For the same reason, cruise vessels will never dock in Inner Harbour again. Indeed, there has not been a cruise vessel dock in Inner Harbour for many years. The port tugs are relocating to the seaward side of the bridges (dock 2) and the tall ships are also moving to the seaward side of the bridges (dock 2). We understand that the Port Adelaide Yacht Club will relocate to a new marina to be constructed at Snowdon's Beach. Most pleasure craft will freely move under the closed bridges with a 10 metre clearance, as will the Port River cruise vessels. Who is left to use them? We would say they are yachties purchasing a marina berth with their new condominium that could fit tabernacle masts, as they do in Fremantle. Indeed, why would someone purchasing a marina berth moor their yacht so far from the open sea? It will take at least one hour to sail out. They could hop into their car, drive down the peninsula to one of the two yacht clubs further seaward and be sailing to the open sea in a much quicker time.

If a large vessel did sail in behind the bridges—and the bridges only open two times a day, as stated by the government—will the opening times suit tourist sailing schedules? We do not think a viable tourist operation could exist under this regime. How long will these vessels be willing to wait for an opportunity to sail through?

MR FOTHERINGHAM: I am the Managing Director of the Royal Automobile Association. The RAA has put forward strong cases in the past for the bridges to be closed; that is, fixed. We do not support opening bridges. All the reasons have been given and we would support those.

The only other comment I make is that over the life of these bridges the additional capital cost and the additional operating cost will be significant. I have seen and heard a number of figures put around about that—as high as 146—and I think there are other figures on the table over a 30 year life.

If I look at that amount of money on opening bridges and what will be gained from opening bridges versus the risk, then I can find any other number of transport projects which, in the RAA's view, are a far higher priority. For example, this state has a backlog of road maintenance of about \$160 million. If we look at the needs of starting to duplicate roads down to Victor Harbor, for example, then the money saved on the opening bridges would go a long way to constructing that sort of facility. The RAA does not believe that this is money well spent. Having said that, we support all the work that is being done at Port Adelaide. The bridges are a vital part of that project. I think we have to get on and build them. I would not want to see any delay in building them over this argument.

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MR WIERDA: I am the Chief Executive Officer of the Port Adelaide Enfield council. We are here to speak in support of the road and rail bridges being opening bridges. Our reason for supporting them to be opening is that we see that will assist in the long-term social and economic development of the city. We feel that opening bridges will support the development that is about to take place along the Port River front.

We feel that we would like the committee to assist in the authorisation of this project as quickly as possible. The last thing we want is further delays. We have already suffered significant delays. The Port River Expressway will be completed well before the bridges go in, sending the trucks—which the bridges were designed to take out of the CBD—into the precinct of the CBD. They will be routed around, but it would be much better if the bridges were in so that traffic could go over the bridges and get to their destination as quickly as possible.

In summary, we support the opening bridges. Today we have given a letter to Mr Keith Barrie, dated 7 June, which spells out our support with some of the history and decisions that the council has made over the last couple of years.

MR SHEARER: I am the Executive Director of the South Australian Road Transport Association, which is the peak industry body for the trucking industry in this state. SARTA has the long held view—and it has always made its view very clear—that our preference is for closed bridges. However, we have never been opposed to opening bridges per se. Very simply, our issue is that, if the additional cost was just a couple of million, we would have nothing to say at all about it. We do not have a problem with opening bridges provided the management regime for those bridges does not interfere with and get in the way of the fundamental objective of the entire project and the hundreds of millions of dollars that have been spent on it, namely, safe and efficient movement of road and rail freight.

You heard the arguments earlier about the importance of that economically and to keep products competitive on markets. Now that government has made its decision—and we are not arguing about it; we do not see any point in that—our view involves two key points. First, the \$120 million plus (whatever the final figure works out to be additional cost), when you look at the state budget, has already impacted on other key projects. If that is not the case, then the funding for the other projects is appalling, if that is all they would have received in the first place.

There are other far more important projects for that money, in our view. One has already been mentioned; that is, \$160 million backlog in road maintenance. The budget provides \$22 million for a program that is rather nicely named the 'Long Life Roads' but, in

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fact, in three years, it will deal with just 13 per cent of the backlog in road maintenance. Meanwhile, the road maintenance backlog will grow. The money being spent to build opening bridges could have been used to deal entirely with the road maintenance backlog in the space of the next few years.

Quite clearly, the government recognises that road standards are important as far as road safety goes. Our view is that it should put more money into the infrastructure projects, given its decision to build opening bridges to ensure that that road maintenance backlog is dealt with quickly. Other projects which ought to be addressed and which are now clearly suffering because of the decision include the following. In our view and in the view of the South Australian Freight Council and according to the document it released, the Riddoch Highway needs about \$10 million spent on passing lanes. What we see in the budget is \$2.2 million.

In our view, as a trucking industry, there will be a five-fold increase in the transportation of blue gum logs in the South-East. You can either have all those hundreds of extra trucks on the Riddoch Highway with motorists, or you can invest about \$18 million in the border road and achieve major road safety gains. There is no money in the budget for that project. A comprehensive approach to an effective north-south metropolitan corridor is critically important. That may be the government's intention but we cannot tell from the budget.

We have some significant money (\$186 million) for some tunnels and underpasses, but, if it stops there, we will not have an effective north-south corridor. Given that the bridges will open—and it has been mentioned that 30-minute openings would be acceptable—we would add that the timing of those openings is critical. For example, if the government does not work with the rail and truck operators to ensure that the timing of the opening works, then we will impede the traffic.

Road trains which have proven very safe and which have been very successful—they have not even squashed a cat on Grand Junction Road in five years—will not be allowed to travel along Grand Junction Road, according to the new heavy vehicle access framework that has just been released for comment. They will have to go across the bridges. You have already heard from the exporters what the impact will be if the bridges open at the wrong time. We ask the government to consult with us to work out the correct time to open. We invite the government to work very seriously with the industry to ensure that the problems which have been mentioned do not arise and that it adds an amount to the infrastructure project at least equivalent to the extra cost of building opening bridges.

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MR MARCHANT: I am Chief Executive Officer of Australian Rail Track Corporation. ARTC obviously supports the road-rail bridge development and the redevelopment of the Port precinct area. The rail development will incorporate about \$13.2 million of the overall proposal, and this arises from a contribution of over \$80 million from the Australian government through AusLink to the project. The \$13.2 million would provide a significant upgrade to the double tracking to Birkenhead and Outer Harbor; some five kilometres of double tracking will enable extra capacity.

It provides a significant rationalisation of a number of level crossings to enable average speed and safety to be improved in the area. Obviously it provides for the existing track to come up to speed of 23 tonne axle loads with a 60 kilometre speed, rather than the present 25 kilometre speed through that area. Obviously it also involves construction of longer loops, etc. But the opening bridges, even with restricted times of 30 minutes in the morning and 30 minutes in the evening, would reduce train path and capacity by approximately four trains per day.

The nature of an ongoing bridge increases the reduction in capacity due to close-downs to repair and maintain the opening bridge operation. The added risk of breakdown of the opening system also includes operating risks—and only this weekend we saw, in fact, a very similar opening bridge operation in the US stuck for 24 hours in the opening position, and this bridge was built only in the last three years with the most modern technology. So, it is not an unforeseen event; in fact, it is a likely event.

Regardless of these disbenefits, the cost benefit of the opening feature in the development is open to question. The opportunity cost of the \$70 million plus against other worthy projects raises the question: is this the best cost benefit? If, in fact, the cost had been incremental on the closed bridge, no-one would debate it. But it is now \$70 million plus, in addition to an operating cost of \$3 million per annum just to maintain the operation, and it has to be rebuilt in its operating framework for somewhere in the next 10 to 20 years. That cost has not yet been factored through.

In other words, the cost benefit is open to question, and the beneficiaries may include land development, and so on, some of which is land that ARTC has provided back to the state for nothing—no cost, no reimbursement. If the land development is one of the beneficiaries then possibly the question should be that the beneficiaries should pay for the benefit. If, in fact, the benefit is to enable them to have a maritime wharf with small boats, maybe that benefit should be accrued into the price because, effectively, the question regarding cost benefit is: who are the beneficiaries? How likely is a benefit to be utilised and on what frequency will it be utilised?

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If the benefit is to a small group that pays for it by reimbursement for the land prices in an area that should be redeveloped, we support that. But if it is a small group for that benefit, maybe that benefit should be paid by that small group. If, in fact, it is a much broader benefit, obviously, that benefit should be seen, documented and analysed so we can see it, because then we can deal with why it is a greater benefit than that \$70 million plus the \$3 million per annum going into other worthy projects of which the beneficiaries can be identified, seen and assessed.

We have always supported the road rail bridge. We advocated very strongly for commonwealth funding of some \$80 million, which was a fundamental part of the case we put to AusLink. But the commonwealth funding does not go to opening bridges. So, eventually, the state has to pay that difference. The question then is: why does it not go there? It is because no-one has yet seen a cost benefit of why it is worth doing.

346 MR KOUTSANTONIS: Mr Brown, what do you say to other stakeholders about Newport Quays sharing the cost of the opening bridges?

MR BROWN: What I would say is that the state government is a major beneficiary out of the project itself. It is a joint venture partner in the marina berths and it is also a major beneficiary over the land development through a profit-sharing exercise. In terms of our subsidising the bridges as such, to some extent, our partners are doing that with the intent of reaping the benefits out of the land and marina developments.

347 MR KOUTSANTONIS: Mr Wierda, what do you think the benefit of the opening bridges is to the local economy in Port Adelaide? Can you expand on the potential 10, 20 years down the track of what might be an opportunity cost of opening bridges?

MR WIERDA: We have not tried to quantify the cost. What we can see is that the opening bridges would provide easier access for water craft in and out of the inner harbour. We think that the riverfront development that is to take place within Port Adelaide would be a much more vibrant and exciting development, and it would be a much more desirable place to live, if there was access to the inner harbour by water craft that could be permitted over and above what would be the case if there were fixed bridges. As I say the actual cost or cost benefit, we have not tried to quantify in dollar terms. We see it as an opportunity to make sure that this development has the best possible impact, socially and economically, on the Port Adelaide community. I think it is something which will be of benefit to the state as a whole, as well.

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348 MR BRINDAL: Mr Brown, is there any penalty clause in any agreement of which you have knowledge as a joint venturer with the government as to penalties that might be payable by the state government were the state government to decide not to have opening bridges?

MR BROWN: No.

349 MR BRINDAL: You are sure of that.

MR BROWN: Yes.

350 MR BRINDAL: Mr Wierda, I note your council's resolutions are sequential. I note also that your council does not seem to have discussed the issue between March and April of the Navy not coming in. Quite clearly, your earlier remarks of council and the reason for the bridges being opening in the opinion of the council were to admit Navy vessels. You now know that is not possible. You said to my colleague a minute ago that this was to enable greater vibrancy for the port for water vessels over and above those that could enter with the bridges fixed. Could you clearly tell me your council's opinion of those vessels that will be denied access if the bridges are fixed?

MR WIERDA: Certainly, as you have indicated, it will not be Navy vessels because they have indicated they would not be going there. I think tourism opportunities would present themselves. Tourist operators in the longer term will come forward with proposals, which would make use of opening bridges with larger vessels than those that use the port at the moment. That is basically the type of vessels that we are talking about.

351 MR BRINDAL: Your council wants this to invest \$70 million just in case someone comes up with an opportunity down the track.

MR WIERDA: What the council is saying is that the opening bridges would add greater vibrancy to the port, provide opportunities for the future, and, if the bridges were to be built as fixed bridges, that opportunity would be lost forever.

352 MR BRINDAL: Given your council is one of only two councils in the state that does not pay SA Water for water—you get a free water subsidy from the state government; and you have for the last hundred years or so—if this is so important to your council I cannot see what financial offer your council is making to the state government. It seems to me an example of a council that wants everything for nothing. How much money will you put on the table?

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MR WIERDA: I will correct that. Our council is not one that wants everything for nothing. We meet our obligations. The water issue to which you refer, I will hand over to the director of technical services. He has been dealing with it personally.

MR IAISIELLO: The free water does not apply to the whole council area. It is worth about \$40 000 out of a \$1 million water bill that the council pays.

353 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: Thank you Mr Iaisiello. I think that has little to do with the bridges.

354 MR BRINDAL: It has a lot to do with the money they have got.

355 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: Mr Wierda, while the question was asked of you, could you tell the committee the level of community support for the bridges opening versus closed, given that you suggested that the potential to exploit the future vibrancy of the port would be better if they were opening bridges. What is the local community's position?

MR WIERDA: There has been quite a bit of community agitation over recent times, particularly when there were suggestions that the bridges may not be opening. Certainly, in relation to letters to the editors, by far the opinion is that the bridges should be opening. The main thrust of bridges not being opening seems to be coming from organisations other than those based in the port itself. The community by and large, I think, is quite strongly demanding opening bridges.

356 MR VENNING: Mr Brown, we presume that it is a joint venture, with the state government as your joint venturer.

MR BROWN: That is correct. Well, I will qualify that: it is not a traditional joint venture, but through the LMC they are our partner, yes.

357 MR VENNING: Is there a written agreement with them in relation to this policy for the bridge?

MR BROWN: We have a development agreement in place already, yes.

358 MR VENNING: Is this project mentioned in that agreement?

MR BROWN: No.

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359 MR VENNING: We understand that one of the main reasons for lifting bridges is to give tall ships access to the inner port. Particularly in view of your marine development—and you can understand that on the surface—how many tall ships are currently in port at Holdfast Shores marina? Have you been down there and had a look?

MR BROWN: I do not believe there are any at Holdfast Shores.

360 MR VENNING: Why not?

MR BROWN: Holdfast Shores is not a traditional port and does not have the traditional nature of Port Adelaide, which has historically been our port. Ultimately, the best world class developments in the world have maintained their traditional heritage through the influence of tall ships and other such large pleasure craft which activate and reactivate the waterfront. It is crucial to a successful waterfront development.

361 MR VENNING: You are offering lifestyle change down there?

MR BROWN: Yes.

362 MR VENNING: Have you considered the extra noise that will be involved with a lifting bridge, particularly with the operation of the bridge and also with trains going over it? Not being fixed, it will be a lot noisier. Has that issue been raised with you?

MR BROWN: It certainly has been a consideration, but when you assess the pros and cons, certainly the opening nature of the bridge far outweighs any noise impact.

363a MR VENNING You have talked about a commercial vessel. What is a commercial vessel?

MR KAVINA: Under the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), a commercial vessel is any vessel which is more than 500 gross tonnes.

363 MR VENNING: Even if it is privately owned?

MR KAVINA: Yes.

364 MR VENNING: Pleasure craft can still be a commercial vessel?

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MR KAVINA: Pleasure craft are a different area. If you are looking at a pleasure craft or pleasure ship, if you like, they come under commercial, but if you have something that is under 500 gross tonnes or even if it is over 500 gross tonnes but registered as a pleasure craft for one person's pleasure, then that is not considered commercial.

365 MR BRINDAL: The *Young Endeavour* would be a commercial vessel?

MR KAVINA: Yes, but she is less than 500 gross tonnes.

366 MR VENNING: You raised a point that I had not thought of before, particularly when we are negotiating two 30-metre spans. Is there any problem with the current licensing of pilots? Do they have to be specially trained to do that? Is there any place in Australia where this happens?

MR KAVINA: I do not believe there is anywhere in Australia where two opening spans actually occur. I am not sure where you have two opening spans and therefore, yes, we will have to have pilots trained specifically for that operation.

367 MR VENNING: Is that a cost? Is there a problem with having a pilot do this who is not qualified?

MR KAVINA: There is a cost in terms of training. There are people who have come to us and said they can provide the training. There are different hydrodynamic reactions to ships going through two opening bridges. That will all come up—

368 MR VENNING: If you get it wrong with the first one, you are in trouble with the second one, aren't you?

MR KAVINA: Yes, you certainly are.

369 MS CICCARELLO: I would like to ask Mr Kavina a question (pardon my ignorance) about the difference between going through one or two spans and what extra skills or requirements are needed by the pilot.

MR KAVINA: When you have one opening span, it depends on the design of the bridge. I am not privy to the design of the bridge. It could be minimal, but if you are going through a part of water that is closed—

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370 MR KOUTSANTONIS: Like the Panama Canal?

MR KAVINA: The Panama Canal is a closed area. You might have the locks, which are 300 metres long, but they are always enclosed. You are asking us to go through a 30 metre opening span and a short amount of water, and then I assume there will be nothing and then you have to go again to another bridge. The safest way is to engage tugs and you have a narrow straight path connecting it, which will be an added cost.

371 MR BRINDAL: If the Inner Harbor is not used much, you are saying that you as an operating organisation will have to have highly specialised trained tug operators who, on rare occasions, are required to use a high level of expertise to take the occasional commercial vessel through these two openings and your clear evidence is that with two spans the risk is increased more than if there is one span, which I understand, because when you go into the Panama Canal the ship is parallel to the course it is going on and cannot deviate. It is locked into a race, like sheep going down a tunnel. So, that's your evidence?

MR KAVINA: That is correct. It is not only the tug operators but also the pilots of the ship. The pilots are employed by us, but tug operators are not employed by us.

372 MR BRINDAL: So, to have opening bridges will involve additional extra cost that is hidden because your commercial entity, which will charge the ABB and everybody else who uses the port because you have to make your profit, has an additional hidden cost there to start off with.

MR KAVINA: I do not believe the ABB will be using the Inner Harbor.

373 MR BRINDAL: But if they use your tugs to come in and out of Outer Harbor you have to recover all your costs, don't you.

MR KAVINA: Yes.

374 MR BRINDAL: So they will be paying a bit more for the tugs because you are giving the extra training?

MR KAVINA: It could be.

375 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: I have not had a great deal of frequent dealings with this issue, but, in my previous life in the Fire Brigade, they have a high level of expertise and skill, anyway, and I am assuming that that high level of expertise and skill would be that

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which underpins the necessary training. I would not expect it to take a great deal of extra training to enable these people to acquire the additional skills to go through a dual span bridge—would that be right?

MR KAVINA: That is correct. The pilots are master mariners, and you require additional training, but they have a high level of skill.

376 MR BRINDAL: I am not aware of trade unions very much; it is not my area of expertise, but generally speaking if you fly a small plane you get paid X and if you fly a bigger plane you get paid Y. It seems to be a union bargaining point that the greater the level of expertise the more you get paid. Would you expect that the more you require your tug operators to acquire a greater level of expertise the more their log of claims will be?

MR KAVINA: It is the pilots we are talking about and not the tugs. The pilots are the highest there are in the market at the present moment, so I am not expecting them to—

377 MR BRINDAL: To want more money.

MR KAVINA: I would hope not.

378 MR VENNING: The bridge opens twice a day, and with large ships, and considering that the draught under this bridge is seven to 10 metres, should this correspond with tides?

MR KAVINA: The depth in the Inner Harbor is 9.3 metres and obviously you have the draught of the vessel plus an under keel clearance, so that the ship is off the bottom at all times. It depends on the draught of the ship going into the harbor whether we do it with the tide or without.

379 MR VENNING: In a worst case scenario, that is, a ship hitting a pylon on the rail bridge—

380 MR BRINDAL: It happened in Tasmania, did it not?

381 MR VENNING: It did and it does happen. As soon as it is open, would you have extra insurance liabilities in relation to covering an accident like this?

MR KAVINA: No, we would not, and this is why I mentioned it specifically in the statement that I read out. Our state-licensed pilots are actually indemnified under the

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Harbors and Navigation Act. However, that is pilotage within Flinders Ports waters, and we will be pushing the government to increase those indemnifications.

382 MR BRINDAL: Does that mean that the Crown indemnifies your pilots so if that, if there is an accident, the Crown is liable, the Crown meets the cost?

MR KAVINA: The Crown does not meet the cost, but the pilot is sort of exonerated. It is still a court case and there are protection indemnities that exist. We still have insurance and those sorts of things, but the fault is not pinpointed to the pilot. This is international law: it is not pointed to the pilot itself.

383 MR BRINDAL: That means that, when the civil case comes up, Flinders Ports would have its own insurance and its insurers would cover any cost that accrues through the courts.

MR KAVINA: Yes.

384 MR BRINDAL: Have you worked out the bottom line in terms of what you think is the saleable value of the whole package you are offering? Have you worked out the difference between what you will get for the entire package with opening bridges and with closing bridges?

MR BROWN: No, I have not done that exercise.

385 MR BRINDAL: Would you consider that your development would lose much money if the bridges were not to be opening or that it would basically be cost neutral?

MR BROWN: No, we would lose a significant amount of money.

386 MR BRINDAL: Are you aware of the real estate developments in the city of Perth?

MR BROWN: I am aware of some developments in the city of Perth, yes.

387 MR BRINDAL: Are you aware of the fact that there is not an opening bridge between the port of Fremantle and the city of Perth?

MR BROWN: I was not specifically aware of that.

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388 MR BRINDAL: That is a fact. Are you aware of the costs of real estate along the Swan River?

MR BROWN: I know it is expensive.

389 MR BRINDAL: It is much more expensive than Adelaide; would you agree with that?

MR BROWN: It depends where you look in Adelaide, but it is certainly expensive.

390 MR BRINDAL: Would you therefore accept that, if the city of Perth has expensive waterfront blocks and the people have large yachts, and quite large yachts use a pivotal mast structure to get under not one but a series of closed bridges to get to their expensive block of land, I might be able to form the conclusion that you would not really lose very much money at all if we keep the bridges closed?

MR BROWN: I do not agree with that.

391 MR BRINDAL: I remain to be convinced.

392 MS CICCARELLO: I have a question of Mr Shearer. Unless I misunderstood, you seem to be a little bit at odds with the others. You have indicated that, whilst you had a preference for opening bridges, you do not see that it is actually a problem as long as the openings and the timing are managed properly; is that correct?

MR SHEARER: That is correct: so long as the opening regime is managed properly. Obviously, it will not work if the bridges get stuck, and I think that would be a major problem for the people who build them. I am sure the government has some assurances and some capability to react, but if the bridges open properly and do not get stuck, and they open for a period of time and at a time of the day that is properly planned, the impact on road transport and freight could be kept to an absolute minimum and we could plan around that. That is why I said at the outset that we have never opposed opening bridges per se. What we are opposed to is the dramatically greater cost and the impact that is having on other infrastructure.

393 MS CICCARELLO: Perhaps on that, I think everyone has indicated that money should be spent on our roads. I would just like to ask the question, given that even local government has agitated about the fact that South Australia is not getting its fair share from

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the commonwealth, of the organisations present, how many have made representations to the federal government about increased funding for roads in South Australia?

MR SHEARER: It might be worth reminding the committee that, in the lead-up to last year's federal election, four of the organisations that are here—the South Australian Road Transport Association, the RAA, the Freight Council and Business SA—ran a very effective campaign at their own cost which resulted in \$118 million extra being provided by the federal government that the state government did not even get close to securing. So, in fact, we have made very strong representations and will continue to do that and we would say this state government, and all state governments here, need to lift their game in that regard. The \$160 million backlog in road maintenance is not the product of one government for a three-year term. It is the product of a number of governments over a period of time, but this government is in place and we say this government should deal with the problem.

394 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: Does anyone else want to comment on Vini's question because it was a open question? Mr Shearer may have answered on behalf of the four organisations.

MR FOTHERINGHAM: I would like to confirm that only last week RAA representatives were in Canberra. We had meetings with the Deputy Prime Minister, with the minister for roads, Jim Lloyd, and probably a dozen other federal members, putting the case that South Australia is still not getting its fair share of national road funding. It is a very strong issue. The other point that I would make, though, is that, every time we talk with the federal representatives, they turn around and blame the state government for not spending enough, either. We get caught as the meat in the sandwich and they just throw it straight back at us. We were able, out of this last budget, to say that the state government here is now starting to commit to some large projects. We were able to demonstrate that to the federal government and use that as an argument for trying to secure more AusLink money.

MR MARCHANT: I wouldn't ever want to concede that I have lobbied for road money, running a rail company, so I don't want to make too many concessions on that, except to say, as part of AusLink—and we were one of the parties drawing up the AusLink white paper—the white paper included, as with any bidding process, the \$80 million for a road-rail port connection here in Adelaide, federally funded. We did lobby for that, even though the great bulk of money is going to roads, which disappointed me, but the reality is that you don't get a road-rail bridge without it. We did the same for other port connections in Melbourne and Perth. In the context of that, this is not a commonwealth-state issue. The commonwealth, through AusLink, is putting \$80 million into a project which, without opening, is only

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\$130 million, so it is massively funded by the commonwealth. The difference in the funding is when it becomes opening.

395 MR KOUTSANTONIS: When this project was first developed, it was going to be tolled and it was going to be opening. The expense was a user-pays expense. Then this government decided that it should not be tolled and that the users, that is, the bodies around here, should not be forced to pay for those services, which we think was a very good decision. Now you are telling us that the state should not be spending that money. Are you advocating going back to the tolls?

MR MARCHANT: If you could effectively do a toll and it was economically rational, I would support it. The reason you didn't do it is because it is impossible to enforce. The reality is that you would have had the trucks going around the new bridge, going through the back roads, and it would have defeated the very issue of truck movements in that area. The toll might have been a good thing because the beneficiaries would have paid for what the benefit is. But the point is, they wouldn't have. They would have diverted around it, Port Adelaide Enfield council would have a headache because they would have these trucks going around it all the time. So it was a rational decision not to toll it.

The reverse of that is that, if the benefit is to those few land-holders who are going to get the land next to the water, one of which may be me, because I would love to live at the water here—I presently live in the Norwood electorate—and if living next to the water I get a marina with it, and I get the marina with it because of the benefit of the opening bridge, should I pay extra for that? In my view, I should. In my view, if I have to have the marina with an opening bridge, and that adds another \$50 000 or \$100 000 to my block, I am actually paying for the benefit that I accrued. I am happy to buy the block without the opening bridge because I like to be on the water there, but if I am going to get the benefit of it opening, and that benefit is really restricted to me, because it is not the Navy and all the other nonsense that is going around—

396 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: Sorry; I do not have a crystal ball, and I cannot see into the future as well as other people, so everything we have heard today about the potential to encompass into the future a cultural heritage tourist precinct is nonsense?

MR MARCHANT: No; a cultural heritage tourist precinct has nothing to do with the opening bridge. The only thing to do with the opening bridge is either the tall ship argument or the tourist ships. The first problem with the tourist ship debate—

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397 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: I understand that about the tourist ships. So, potentially, we can have tall ships in the inner harbour into the future with opening bridges; we cannot do that with closed bridges.

MR MARCHANT: Absolutely; on tall ships, I totally agree. However, the next thing is that it is not just tall ships: it is also coastal cruisers (the new cruise ships). The new cruise ships pose just one problem and that is that they are actually now going into super ships that are 11 storeys high, etc. The reason that the port is being dredged now to make deeper port cavities, which is obviously good for South Australia, and I totally support that, but the reality is that the tourist ships are actually getting bigger and deeper. You might get the Queen Anne in except she is going to be scrapped in a couple of years, and the new developments for tourist ships are, in fact, much deeper, wider and higher. The reality is that they will go to the part of the port that has been dredged because that is where the tourist market is going. The reality is the cost of running it.

398 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: I guess I was looking more at the concept of the tourist precinct within the Port Adelaide environs and that area where you wish to live more so than the 11 storey tall ships coming in because I understand that that would be a problem—I know where they are going to port. I am talking about, as best I can, the future potential to exploit, as a tourist precinct, the Port Adelaide inner harbour area based on the cultural heritage and the colonial port aspect that once was the port.

MR MARCHANT: I fully support that, but I am not sure what that has to do with an opening bridge.

399 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: I am just exploring whether or not that would be compromised through an opening versus closed bridge. We do not know what is going to happen in the future. We know that tall ships are one aspect of it, and that was the point that I wished to make.

400 MR KOUTSANTONIS: Given the former government's policy of tolled bridges, your evidence is that people have gone around, and the federal government is contributing about \$80 million towards this infrastructure—

MR MARCHANT: As a non-tolled.

401 MR KOUTSANTONIS: If it were tolled, and what you say came to fruition, the state government would have been spending a lot of money upgrading alternative routes as well because they would still be used. In effect, you could almost argue that it is cost neutral.

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MR MARCHANT: Let me answer that in two parts. Firstly, if the toll could have been done effectively and been policed, then the beneficiaries for the bridge framework including the opening could have actually been paying for that. The reality is that the reason that it is not tolled was that, when people studied it correctly, they could find that it was easier to avert paying the toll and subvert the whole project. The state government then would have been left with a major financial problem because it had to underwrite the toll in the bid. That is why in the AusLink process, when it was then re-examined, the reality was that it was better for the Australian government, AusLink and the rail staff to actually put their money in untolled because it was too easy to subvert the toll and, therefore, it would put everybody in financial strife. So, it was done to make sure that the reality of the public policy getting the trucks and the rail together out of that precinct, to put them onto a roadway, which actually gets them away from the rest of the population and frees up the land for the very development to take place, became much more rational on a non-tolled basis. But, that is different. The cost benefit is that, if you had not done a toll bridge, and the reality was that it was easy to circumvent, you would have been left with twice the problem. You would have paid the capital, partly paid for by the private sector and developer, but they would not have underwritten the loss, therefore, you would have been exposed to the loss.

402 MR KOUTSANTONIS: Aren't we now getting all that benefit plus, with the opening bridges, a hypothetical benefit into the future that is yet to be realised or seen?

MR MARCHANT: I accept that you have three disbenefits that go from it. First, the costings of that time were around \$130 million; it is now \$170 million plus. Secondly, the costings that we had then estimated for the opening costs were actually lower than what the bids have now proven. The bids are now in; you can see the actual dollars. You have seen a situation where the total of opening bridge with all the framework was \$130 million; it is now \$170 million plus. You now have the next part of the equation which is the operating cost and the renewal cost, including, after the 10 years when the operator moves away and, therefore, you are exposed to the bridge, the cost of opening and closing. That is now a much higher figure than was envisaged.

At the time of the \$130 million, we did not worry too much about the opening and closing framework, because we thought we could work around it. But now you actually have a situation that has gone from \$130 million to \$170 million, and the only argument is tall ships and some marina developments. You start to wonder: where is the \$70 million? Is that the best argument for \$70 million plus \$3 million a year operating costs?

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403 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: Before we move on, Mr Shearer, you wanted to add something, and Mr Murphy, you wanted to respond to the question posed by Vini. Then, Mr Shearer, you can add to what Mr Marchant said.

MR MURPHY: I just wanted to respond to the question about whether or not there had been approaches to the federal government regarding South Australia's poor outcome in terms of AusLink. I point out that the South Australian Freight Council wrote to every South Australian politician and every South Australian federal politician, including some significant others, about the poor outcome for AusLink. We have only undertaken a broad communication campaign on one other issue like that, that is, the Port River Expressway, and the bridges element. They are the two issues that we have taken to all South Australian politicians, both state and federal.

404 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: The matter that you took to the state politicians was on the urgency of bridges being built, not so much opening verses closed?

MR MURPHY: No; the argument we took was that these bridges should be closed.

MR SHEARER: I would like to add a very important clarification on tolls from your question. I would take a different view on one point. I mentioned in my initial statement that the government has indicated in its recently released heavy vehicle access framework—that is the big thick document that shows where all the lines on the maps are for trucks—that anything above a semitrailer is a restricted access vehicle, and can only go where there is a line on a map. The line has been removed from Grand Junction Road from Eastern Parade onwards towards the port. With the implementation—which we hope this government does not back away from—of the very important compliance and enforcement laws which are due to go through in October this year, the penalties are huge for a truck that is overweight (over mass) and a double road train on a semitrailer route would be massively overweight, and the trucking industry and even that very small minority of fools who might think about it, simply would not contemplate it. We would not go the other way.

However, your argument is still lost, in my view, for one very simple reason: the trucking industry will not pay a toll; our customers will. Our principal customers are people who are represented by the Farmers Federation. They made it very clear at a meeting that I was at with the Premier that they could not wear that because of the levy they are already going to carry in relation to the deepening of the port. Unless you want to contemplate making grain from this state uneconomic on the international market and destroying the grain industry, you do not impose a toll which they would have to pay. That is why we don't have a toll.

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The toll issue has absolutely nothing to do with the difference between an opening and closing bridge. Opening and closing bridges are all about whether or not the additional cost is warranted for the benefits that you get. We do not have a problem with it provided infrastructure projects in this state are not disadvantaged elsewhere, and that is clearly happening.

MR WIERDA: Can I make an observation about tolling? To begin with, the council would not be in favour of toll bridges. However, in relation to some of the arguments being put as to whether or not it is feasible, you have to go back to the reasons for the bridges, one of which is that the Birkenhead Bridge is getting to an age where before very much longer it will not be able to take the heavy loads. In relation to heavy traffic coming off the Port Expressway, if you do not go over the bridge and pay the toll—if there is a toll—the only feasible alternative is the Birkenhead Bridge and, within not too great a distant future, there will be a load limit on it, which would prevent you from using it. So, I think tolling is feasible, but we do not support it.

405 MR BRINDAL: Thank you for your evidence saying that this is not an issue about tolling or non-tolling: it is an issue about cost differential. On behalf of Ivan and me, I want you and your organisations to all understand that we supported opening bridges in the beginning, when we were in government, because there appeared to be little cost differential. If we were in government today, we would not be supporting opening bridges—end of story. Can I ask anyone around the table when was the last time we had significant Tall Ships come to this state, and I am not talking about the two that are here and are shifting north, but a significant visit of Tall Ships? I am only 57, but I can only ever remember one time in the 57 years I have been alive when there was a significant presence of Tall Ships in the inner harbour of Port Adelaide. So, you would all accept the fact that, if there has been only one significant visitation of Tall Ships in the last 50 years, there may be only one in the next 50 years, and it is going to cost us \$70 million for them to come into the port. Is anyone going to counter that?

406 MR VENNING: I direct my question to the ARTC, which controls the tracks in South Australia. My major concern is that, if something goes wrong with this bridge—such as it gets jammed or it is taken out, or someone knocks over a pylon—currently the old railway goes round through the port. Is that railway currently under your control?

MR MARCHANT: Part of the connection around is, but we are separating that out and taking it out.

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407 MR VENNING: Is it an option to leave that there in case of an emergency, because it is going to be pulled up?

MR MARCHANT: There is always an option to leave it there if someone is prepared to pay for it, which will only add to the costs again.

408 MR VENNING: It is already there, though.

MR MARCHANT: It has to be maintained and kept secure, and we are actually handing that land over as part of the land development.

409 MR VENNING: That is right; it is going in to that development. They want only that rail behind them.

410 MR BRINDAL: They are going to sell it and make a profit out of it, aren't they?

411 MR VENNING: If the rail bridge goes out, there is no alternative but to get the trucks out and put it all on trucks. Your submission is a very good one, with a lot of information in it. You said that, because the bridge is going to be open for half an hour twice a day, four to five trains will be affected. So, obviously we are going to have some trains waiting, aren't we, because, as the bridge opens, one or even two trains will probably be waiting? Where are they going to wait?

MR MARCHANT: Part of this exercise is that we are building a double track of five kilometres to enable trains either side to move in and out. Another part is that we are putting in \$2 million to build an additional loop in the Wingfield area to have as a holding framework to move trains in and out. The four or five paths becomes an issue if everything is working at maximum capacity and you have a grain surge going through and you have to move the boats through quickly. We are building capacity to hold trains, but what that does, though, is restrict the number of trains we can hold. We are not going to hold up the whole main line between Melbourne and Perth for a few grain trains going to the Port; that is just not going to happen. However, we are building additional loops.

412 MR VENNING: Is it fair to say that, if you are stopping a train and it is waiting there, one empty and one full, there would be an increased noise by them stopping and starting again? Is it close to a residential area?

MR MARCHANT: Basically, the holding areas are close to the industrial areas—Penrose and the rest. We have deliberately put them in areas to make sure that there is

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not a large inconvenience to the population. The objective of increasing the speed is to reduce noise. So, honestly, it is not our objective to try to hold trains there. Even during the closing periods we are going to try to manage it to make sure that it does not work that way, but doing that will restrict the number of trains because (for obvious reasons) we do not want a whole lot sitting around—it just makes it worse. So, the answer is that there is going to be reduced capacity because we are not going to put as many trains through on the chance, but we did have some parking areas put in.

413 MR VENNING: But as a rail operator you must be very concerned that if anything happens to this bridge—whether it be at sea, like if something hits a pylon, or the thing malfunctions or jams open—that would just be tragic, because there is no alternative, is there?

MR MARCHANT: It would certainly have a cost impact while it was corrected, and it certainly would have a capacity impact.

414 MR KOUTSANTONIS: What about bridges that do not open over water: aren't there similar risks?

MR MARCHANT: Any bridge is a risk, I totally agree with that. The issue is that the opening capacity adds additional risk to it because it could get jammed, but any bridge is a risk, any framework—the opening thing just adds to the risk.

415 MS CICCARELLO: You indicated that with the opening bridges there would be a reduction of four trains per day. How many trains would you anticipate going across in any one day?

MR MARCHANT: Quite frankly, it depends on my colleagues here from the grain area because the grain framework works on surges. Effectively, you can get 10 or 15 trains a day—and that is one way, so 30 train movements—but the hours become quite critical because of the turnaround framework required for the blending of the grain framework, etc. So, depending on what the time is, it can be an issue, but you plan around that.

416 MS CICCARELLO: And this would also be seasonal?

MR MARCHANT: It depends on the long-term view of the port. Part of the port is arguing that this is not just about grain; the reality is that other products—such as wine and

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other things—will start to move to the port by rail and they are more non-seasonal, they are actually just an ongoing framework.

417 MS CICCARELLO: The critical ones would be the grains, which at certain times of the year would possibly have a greater impact.

MR MARCHANT: Much more critical, because their shipping arrangements are much tighter and they do need a different turnaround ratio.

418 MR VENNING: A question very relevant to this: if we have Panamax ship sitting at the berth, how much capacity is actually at the berth to fill a Panamax ship and how much has to come in down the rail? And how critical is it?

MR TAVERNER: The capacity at the terminal will be 65 000 tonnes, which is approximately the same amount that will be loaded onto a large Panamax vessel. Obviously, we have to accumulate the grain—and as a ship is loaded it empties the storage.

419 MR BRINDAL: Sorry, how many trains to supply the 65 000 tonne?

MR TAVERNER: Roughly 2 500 to 3 000 tonnes a train—

420 MR BRINDAL: So, it is 22-odd trains, approximately?

MR TAVERNER: Yes.

421 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: If it is coming in, in its entirety, in trains.

MR TAVERNER: Yes. There aren't the available resources to run 22 trains consecutively, so what happens is that the grain is accumulated over a period of time.

422 MR BRINDAL: So how many days, in the grain season—

MR TAVERNER: If I can just explain. There will also be many road movements in as well—it will not be 100 per cent reliant on rail, it will probably be an 80:20-type split. Basically, we are working on 5 or 6 days to accumulate for a cargo. Although there are some peaks and troughs, the shipping is spread throughout the year because the customers at the other end basically want their grain spread throughout the year to make their flour, or whatever they use the product for. There is probably more variation from one year to another as you have a big harvest versus a small harvest. We are working on an average of

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three to four trains a day, and it would probably peak at seven or eight—some days you might not have any. Obviously, there will be other rail traffic as well on the lines, and we hope the facility that we are developing down there may be able to attract some other mineral-type products as well in the longer term—

423 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: What will be the capacity of the storage facility there?

MR TAVERNER: 65 000.

424 MR VENNING: You mentioned demurrage costs. If a ship is sitting there and we are delayed with loading there could be this cost called demurrage. What sort of money are we looking at, and who pays?

MR TAVERNER: Currently, with the Panamax vessels, these larger vessels, the daily cost is about \$US25 000 to \$US30 000 a day. That cost is either to the buyer or the owner of the grain. It depends on the arrangements as to where the point of sale takes place as to whether it is the owner of the grain who is chartering the vessel or whether it is the buyer of the grain who is chartering the vessel. One way or another, it comes off the price.

425 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: If the opening and closing of the bridge is going to delay trains, to a certain extent, that will be a management issue for the industry, given that there will be hours of opening of those bridges and you will work around that. Notwithstanding that, there will still be a delay. Is it expected that, when the Panamax ships come in, on most occasions (regularly or irregularly) the storage facility will hold the capacity that is required by those ships?

MR TAVERNER: It depends on the period of time between the vessels.

426 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: Is that a management issue, too, about ships coming in: how much have we got, whether or not we have planned for that ship coming in and made sure that we have enough produce to fill that ship in the most timely fashion so that it can go about its business?

MR TAVERNER: It is very much a logistics management task, absolutely. If you have a week between vessels, you can accumulate the cargo and it could all be there. If you have two days between vessels, it could take two days to load, so you could be accumulating at the same time as you are loading the vessel. On a number of occasions, you

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might have some of the cargo, and you might be accumulating it during the course of loading. That is the sort of occurrence that takes place now when we are loading vessels.

427 MR VENNING: We hope this port will be very competitive, because our industry has been put out with costs over the years with two-port loading and all sorts of things.

428 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: Our industry?

429 MR VENNING: Our industry. Are you concerned about costs like demurrage and a would-be toll? I think a toll is down the track, because I can't see any reason why Port Adelaide should keep trucks out by putting a weight limit on the bridge or even on the roads. So we could go back to a toll, I do not think is out of the question in the future—

430 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: Is that Liberal policy?

431 MR BRINDAL: No, it's not.

432 MR VENNING: No. Are you concerned, because ABB Grain, as with AusBulk and the farmers (I am one of them—I declare that again, Mr Chair) are very competitive with the Port of Melbourne and the Port of Portland, both of which are trying to get this business. Are you concerned that, with all these factors in there, our investment might be risky?

MR TAVERNER: I think you can never completely eliminate all the risk. We are not experts on building bridges so I cannot really comment on the risk associated with jamming.

433 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: But one of the risks you mentioned earlier, which has maybe been reinforced by everyone, is that a risk is involved with any further delays.

MR TAVERNER: We highlighted that we are concerned that there is a risk of the bridges jamming open. We believe that this whole issue about getting a better port for the Port Adelaide catchment, which is really the eastern half of the state for grain, has been going on over a long period of time, and we believe it is important that we make progress.

434 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: Mr Wierda, you wanted to clarify something before we proceed?

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MR WIERDA: Yes. Mr Venning made the point that the council may or may not want to put on a load limit. The council cannot put on a load limit because it is not our road and it is not our bridge; it belongs to Transport SA. In fact, the council has already asked the government to put on a load limit, and the advice was that it was not likely to happen until after the new bridges were in.

435 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: For the record, that is the Birkenhead Bridge. I will ask Ms Vincent to make a statement, and then it will be back to you, gentlemen.

MS VINCENT: The South Australian Farmers Federation is totally opposed to any tolls. A toll would impede the sustainability and growth of our industry, which means that export markets would be severely limited because of the cost to industry. We are highly opposed to tolls. The Premier, in many forums, has said that, as part of the State Strategic Plan, he wants to see exports grow by a significant percentage by 2013. The agricultural industry supports that totally, and the Farmers Federation supports that totally. The argument about opening and closing bridges (if it continues for any length of time) has the potential to impact on the speed of the growth and potential of growing our export markets.

Also, it puts us in serious competition with the other states that are wanting to upgrade and build the infrastructure of their own ports. Speed is essential in the agricultural industry for its growth, and especially for its export market growth. One thing that does disturb me about the process that we are going through today is that all of us are being caught in between a political process, and I think that is highly destructive to each of the sectors that are represented today. I do not think that it is reasonable for us to be put in a position where we do the work of the government or the opposition.

Everyone representing the agricultural sectors today have said that if the bridges open at the wrong time of the day or there are difficulties with mechanisms, obviously, that will impact on our industry. You have heard the arguments and discussions from the other people around the table. People are saying the same things; they are just saying them in different ways. I think that, if he were here, the Farmers Federation President would support me in that we have heard enough from everyone. We are being caught in a political process. Could we get to the point where the decisions are made at the appropriate level and the rest of us get to go.

436 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: Ms Vincent, very well said.

437 MR BRINDAL: I want to say something to that. In deference to you, Ms Vincent, that is an unfair assertion to this committee. This committee is working and meeting

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for the purpose of deciding the best expenditure of public money. It comes down to an additional \$70 million. Mr Venning, the opposition party in this state and I will not do anything—we stand on our track record when it comes to your members—to try to impede any part of industry in South Australia. You are suggesting that, because we are talking about the additional expenditure of \$70 million, it is part of a party political process. It is part of a party political process where everyone of you as witnesses are involved.

Ten, eight or whatever number out of 12 have said today, 'No, we do not think that the expenditure is warranted.' If that is political, well, I am very sorry. We will try to get on with it as quickly as we can, but, in the interests of the people of South Australia, it is justified that this committee ask the questions and take the time necessary to make those decisions. I am not really having a go at you: I am having a go at your statement, because I think that this is what the parliament is about, which is questioning the expenditure of money. I really object to any suggestion that this is just party political and that the opposition is cheap point scoring on \$70 million. It was not our decision.

438 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: Just hold on for a minute. Ms Vincent, you have made your point, which I think was very well made. Mark you have made your point. Ms Vincent, are you satisfied to move on from this, or do you want to respond to what Mark has said? Can we move on to ask questions that Mark wants to ask with respect to the nature of the project?

MS VINCENT: I would like to make one statement. Mark, you have misunderstood me. I did not attack the opposition. I put the government and the opposition in the same basket and said that we were being put in the position of making everyone's decision for them. The Farmers Federation appreciates the opportunity to present evidence today, and we have been interested in hearing the evidence that has been presented, but I am saying that, it seems to me, we are going over the same ground, and I just say let us get on with it.

439 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: That was a very healthy exchange.

440 MR BRINDAL: I am interested in the concept. As far as I have known rail over my lifetime, it still has some technical requirements in that it is 2005 but problems associated with derailments and all sorts of things are probably as serious as they were 100 years ago. Is it not true to say that, you said there is a risk factor associated with bridges? Is it not also true to say that, if a bridge is an opening bridge for rail, the risk factor increases? I am not asking you to say by how much, but that an opening bridge has a greater risk factor for rail than a closing bridge technically.

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MR MARCHANT: The risk factor that arises is only the risk factor if something went wrong with its opening and closing function and you would lose capacity. I am not suggesting that is a safety risk as distinct from an economic risk of loss of capacity. The other question you asked about is an issue—

441 MR BRINDAL: So there is an additional risk?

MR MARCHANT: It is an additional risk of loss of capacity, but I would not put that on the same level as a derailment risk or a framework. It is a capacity risk. It is an economic risk, not a safety risk if that makes sense.

442 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: Is the Australian Rail and Traffic Corporation aware of the amount of time it would take to lower the bridge manually if, for some unknown reason, the bridge remained open? We understand the potential impact that would have on the industry. Are you aware of the time it takes for the bridge to be lowered manually?

MR MARCHANT: It actually depends on why it is stuck open. Manually it can take about a couple of hours, but it depends on why it is stuck open. It does come down to why it is stuck open. You can manually bring it down which certainly limits one group of risk. It does not limit all risk but it limits one risk absolutely.

443 MR BRINDAL: Mr Chairman, I just want to check this with all the witnesses. What we have heard this morning from the Ports Corporation is that, having two bridges under which traffic passes is an increased risk, and the Ports Corporation does not want opening bridges if there is a risk. The rail corporation has said that, if there is a delay, there is a risk. Basically every witness has sung the same story, and the additional \$70 million has been put up, quite clearly.

Against that background, we have two witnesses for the developer and the Corporation of the City of Port Adelaide Enfield, who say that there may be some future gain, which came down to tall ships. When you were out of the room, we ascertained that tall ships come, on average, twice a century. We are being asked to spend \$70 million for events which we cannot foresee or which we might confidently predict happen twice a century, against eight witnesses who say that there should not be opening bridges. I agree with Ms Vincent. I think we should stop this charade and that this committee should clearly recommend that we have closing bridges and start building the project.

444 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: We will deal with your statement during the deliberative time of the committee. You are very good at giving an overview of the role and

function of this committee. You know better than anyone else that deliberative aspects of this meeting are not held in front of witnesses.

445 MR BRINDAL: Mr Chairman, I asked whether anyone was going to refute what I just said. I want to check that what I have said is a summary of the evidence that these witnesses have given. I am giving every one of them the chance to say that I am wrong. It is a question.

446 MR KOUTSANTONIS: Does anyone think that the committee should recommend to the parliament that we should have closed bridges and delay it for six months?

447 MR VENNING: That is a loaded question. Mr Wierda raised a very interesting point when he was talking about the existing Birkenhead Bridge. It is critical, because if anything went wrong, the only access we have to the port is over that bridge. Is there a concern about that bridge? What is its current weight limit and is there a program about replacing or upgrading that bridge?

MR WIERDA: There is no weight limit on the bridge at the moment, as far as I am aware. The bridge is quite aged. As I said, one of the considerations was a need to replace the Birkenhead bridge or, alternatively, have the bridge with a different usage whereby the heavy loads would not go over it on an ongoing basis. Certainly, the new bridges road and rail, once they are in place, would obviate the need to replace or upgrade the Birkenhead bridge because you could lower the weight of traffic going over it. If it is lightweight traffic over it, it will last quite some time. However, with the heavy loads that are now going to the peninsula, that bridge would need significant upgrading or replacement, which is what the government is doing.

448 MR VENNING: What is its life? Has anyone given a forecast on its useful life?

MR WIERDA: I could not say.

449 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: Its useful life would be dependent upon the—

MR WIERDA: On the usage.

450 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: —and the work that needs to be done to make it useful for back-up purposes.

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451 MR VENNING: With respect to the recommendation to this committee, if that is not available, surely we should be getting some data.

MR WIERDA: Transport SA, I am sure, would be able to give you that advice. Certainly, heavy loads over that bridge would shorten its life span. If you can reduce the loads going over it, it will probably last quite some time. But I am sure that Transport SA would be able to give you that advice if you sought it.

MR IAISIELLO: In addition to the Birkenhead Bridge there is another route to Outer Harbor, and that is the heavy vehicle bypass around Bower Road and Causeway Road and back onto Victoria Road. So, there is an alternative to the Birkenhead Bridge.

452 MR VENNING: Is there a load limit on that bridge?

MR IAISIELLO: There is no bridge on that route; it is a causeway.

MR MURPHY: Can I comment on that? This committee has already heard evidence earlier today that the government's new heavy vehicle access strategy removes that route from the heavy vehicle access network. So, that route will not be available to trucks either. There is only one access to the port after the bridges are open.

453 MR VENNING: Even in an emergency?

MR MURPHY: Even in an emergency, unless the government has some policy in its pocket that it has not revealed yet.

454 MR BRINDAL: Mr Murphy, if there was an emergency, the government could re-gazette that as a heavy vehicle route within 24 hours.

455 MR VENNING: You would have to.

MR MURPHY: We would expect so, but it does run on the back of the new development.

456 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: A little bit of hurt will make sure that the economy of South Australia continues to operate effectively in what has been done. We are talking hypotheticals here, and Mark is right.

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MR SHEARER: For my benefit, and perhaps for the committee's, I would like to make sure that I understood Mr Koutsantonis' previous question about whether anyone here would support the proposition of recommending closed bridges if it meant a six-month delay. I am not quite sure where the notion of a six-month delay comes from. If you have already had evidence about that from Transport SA, that is terrific.

However, I would simply make the comment that, if you were to take that into account in your thinking, I would encourage you to inquire of Transport SA as to how many versions of bridge designs it had under way before the decision was announced. My understanding is that it already had done a lot of work on a closed bridge option. We certainly do not want to see a delay because of the export impact. But all these things need to be judged.

There may be a delay; there may not be a delay. It may be six months; it may be one month. If you as a committee were to take that into account, I would encourage you to pursue that. I cannot give you the answer on it, but I would hate anyone to make an assumption, because I suspect it would be false.

457 MR VENNING: Mr Arney, do you have anything to add? I am concerned that, if we do not get this right, we will be playing into the hands of the Victorians—not that there is anything wrong with that. Do you have any input in relation to what farmers think about it?

MR ARNEY: I think it is just vital that the project commenced and that the total project be completed at the earliest time, otherwise we will lose opportunities such as ETSA business, South Australian grown business as opposed to other sectors that may be wishing to provide service to our industry. We have been on this project since about 1994, trying to put it together, so it has taken a long time. I think we've gone down a lot of rabbit burrows. We have investigated things that perhaps were a waste of time, a lot of red herrings have been thrown up, but I think we are at the point now where we have a very good project that is well on its way in terms of planning and commitment to it. Flinders Ports are already incurring costs with dredging, as is the government and the farming industry. Any delay is actually going to put a disadvantage in the way of the farming community. We are not the only sector that use it. Containers will also be dependent upon that efficient network of transport. In terms of grain, we wish to see matters resolved as quickly as possible, with functionality and efficiency being the main drivers.

458 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: Mr Taverner, do you want to add to that?

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MR TAVERNER: Yes, I did not fully answer Ivan's question about the cost impact of Victoria. The whole grain industry is very concerned about our competitiveness with Victoria. It is very important for our project from a financial perspective that we come through this development more competitive with Victoria than we are currently, so that we can attract more grain through our port. So, we are very concerned about cost issues, and we would be very concerned if there was any sort of a toll in the future.

459 MR VENNING: Mr Arney raises a very good point. Mr Taverner, everything being equal, how long before you would have the port up and operational? What time frame would you be looking at?

MR TAVERNER: It is about a two-year construction program; probably a little more than two years, given that we have this little bit of a cycle for tendering, etc.

460 MR VENNING: Have you been told how long it will take to build this lifting bridge? Are you holding back because of the bridge?

MR TAVERNER: Prior to this, the bridges have caused us delay, until we had certainty about the bridges. Our advice from government is that, assuming everything goes ahead, the rail bridge is probably 18 months to two years away. So, we are roughly in the same time frames.

461 MR KOUTSANTONIS: You have the other rail line, it is still functional, why can't you start construction immediately?

MR TAVERNER: The other rail line has a whole lot of issues. There is passenger traffic on part of the line, so there is limited access. You cannot put the same weight on the track as it has lower weight capabilities. So, there are a whole lot of issues, plus there are issues if you have to delay trains. You could block off a number of roads. There are a significant number of issues that make it difficult to use that for access. It is not a long-term solution.

462 MR VENNING: As long as nothing is holding it up, I hope we can get things done as soon as possible because, if we are waiting for each other, that is a big problem, particularly when we have the dredging. The dredging went through this committee only a couple of weeks ago, so things are happening, but I would like to see no delay in relation to this bridge.

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463 MR BRINDAL: I would like to point out, so that all the witnesses know this and they can tell their constituent organisations, that this committee only started deliberating on this project last week. It was presented to us last week, and we are expediting things. There is nothing wrong with that. The government does it all, puts it through cabinet, and then it comes to us. I would like you to assure your organisations that parliament is not holding this up. We have had it for one week, and we have called a special meeting this week to consider it. We will do that as quickly as we can, but I would not make anyone to say that the parliament is holding this up, when it will take about two or three weeks in the process.

464 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: If there are no further questions, thank you for bringing this to our attention today and for your willingness to discuss this issue with the committee; it has been of great benefit to us.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW

465 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: We have a document presented by Mr Beilby on behalf of Vision SA that we will incorporate into *Hansard* without it being read.

466 MR BRINDAL: I will move accordingly.

467 MR KOUTSANTONIS: Hang on; this gives it privilege, so I want to read through it.

468 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: The alternative is to receive it as a committee and then determine, as a committee, how we deal with it, and whether matters of privilege will apply, whatever the committee decides to do.

469 MR KOUTSANTONIS: Okay, I am happy with that.

470 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: That is a change in plan, and for safeguard reasons.

MR BEILBY: Can we have brief undertaking that, if there are no issues of privilege, it will go into *Hansard*?

471 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: I can't give you any undertaking how the committee will decide this matter. What I can give is an undertaking that we will digest this material and determine the best way in which it can be properly aired in the manner that you believe it should be. There being nothing else, the hearing is closed.