



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

Lilydale to Scottsdale: Bridport Main Road to Oakdene Road – Road Reconstruction

Brought up by Mr Best and ordered by the House of Assembly to be printed.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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Mr Hall

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Mr Best
Mrs Napier
Mr Sturges

By Authority: Government Printer, Tasmania

INTRODUCTION

The Committee has the honour to report to the House of Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1914 on the -

Lilydale to Scottsdale: Bridport Main Road to Oakdene Road – Road Reconstruction

BACKGROUND

The Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources has carried out, over recent years, a number of studies to determine the optimum route into the north east of the state. As a result of these studies the Lilydale Main Road/Golconda Road option has been chosen as the preferred route and to which funding for upgrading is to be targeted.

The most recent North East Tasmania Study (NETAS) identified road upgrade projects to the Lilydale Main Road and Golconda Road to enable this route to be suitable for the expected increase in volume of light and heavy vehicles.

One of the projects identified in the NETAS report is the upgrading of the western approach to Scottsdale from Blumont Park to Bridport Main Road (approximately 10km). The NETAS report identified a number of corridors for the upgrading, including the existing road alignment and major deviations from the existing road. A further study was conducted by GHD to refine the possible corridor options and to determine environmental, property impact, agricultural and land impact issues for the options. The assessment involved consultation with Council, industry, the community and property owners. In December 2002 DIER requested Pitt & Sherry to develop concept designs for the possible road corridors and to assess the concept designs in regards to specific traffic engineering, road design and cost issues. Following the assessment, DIER selected a preferred corridor for preliminary and detailed design.

The preferred corridor has been separated into two sections based on the type of road construction as follows:

- Bridport Main Road to East of Oakdene Road (mainly reconstruction of existing road)
- East of Oakdene Road to Blumont Park (major deviation from existing road)

This report provides details on the proposed reconstruction of the section from Bridport Main Road to East of Oakdene Road.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The objectives of the project are as follows:

- Provide a heavy vehicle freight route from Bridport Main Road to East of Oakdene Road on the Golconda Road that also removes heavy vehicle movements from within the local street network of Scottsdale.
- Rationalise and improve junctions and accesses onto the road where possible.
- Remove at grade rail crossings
- Improve safety, especially in areas where there are unprotected hazards.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

The significant justifications for this project are the transport economic benefits and safety improvements for road users. These main issues are discussed in detail as follows.

Transport Economic Benefits

A transport economic analysis has been carried out on the proposal, the results of which are as follows:

- Benefit Cost Ratio: 1.9
- Net Present Value: \$4.3M

The Net Present Value is a direct measure of the net benefits which consider the total benefits and the project and ongoing maintenance costs.

The significant benefits come from the reduction in accident rates and accident severity as well as the reduction in travel times.

Safety

The proposed project incorporates the following significant safety improvements for the road users:

- Widening of the traffic lanes, especially on curves, to allow for the tracking of heavy vehicles within the lane.
- Provision of 1.0m sealed shoulders on both sides of the road to provide a minimum of 8.0m of sealed width across the road.
- Installation of safety barriers where the road is located between the rail and the dams on Hurst Creek. There are currently no barriers installed to prevent vehicles leaving the road and descending the steep slope to the dams.
- Removal of an existing level crossing of the rail line from the freight route. This level crossing does not have any warning lights and relies on motorists seeing trains to prevent accidents.
- Reduced number of heavy vehicle movements within the local street network of Scottsdale and especially past the high school.

THE PROJECT

Proposed Works

The proposed works involve a new road alignment for the western approach to Scottsdale. This new alignment follows the existing Golconda Road from east of Oakdene Road Junction for a distance of 1500m then curves away from the existing road, crosses Hurst Creek and then follows Lister Lane to the Bridport Main Road.

The proposed works include the following:

- Upgrading the section of the Golconda Road that is on the new alignment.
- Construction of a new water storage dam over the top of an existing small dam. The new road would be constructed on the top of this new dam wall to provide the crossing of Hurst Creek.
- Connection of the new road to the existing Listers Lane.
- Upgrading of the junction of Listers Lane onto Bridport Main Road. This upgrading would include provision of a dedicated right and left turn lane on the Bridport Main Road as well as improvements to the junction alignment, traffic facilities and lighting.

A 750m long section of Listers Lane from the connection point of the new road onto Listers Lane to the junction on Bridport Main Road would become a part of the new road. This proposal does not include any upgrading works on this 750m section of Listers Lane as the existing design standards and condition of the pavement are considered adequate for the new road.

Typical Cross Section of the Design

The typical cross section on which the design is based provides two 3.0m lanes and 1.0m sealed shoulder on each side of the road. The unsealed verge on each side of the road is 0.5m, which is widened to 1.0m where safety barrier is required.

Design Alignment

The horizontal and vertical alignment of the proposed new road has been chosen to minimise the impact on adjacent landowners, re-use as much of the existing pavement as possible and tie in with the existing alignment on Listers Lane.

The section of the proposed road that follows the alignment of Golconda Road provides little flexibility in being able to modify the design alignment and only minor changes are possible, though a minimum design speed of 80km/hr has been achieved. Where possible the alignment has been selected to minimise the impact on the railway that is located adjacent to the road. Minimal impact on the railway also ensures minimal impact on adjacent agricultural land.

The section that deviates away from the existing Golconda Road, crosses Hurst Creek and joins onto Listers Lane has been designed for a minimum of 80km/hr and has a

longitudinal grade of up to 8% for a distance of 270m where it crosses Hurst Creek. The alignment has been selected so that the top of the cut batters are adjacent to the existing Listers Lane to minimise land acquisition. The existing section of Listers Lane will be used as an access road for the adjacent properties.

Junctions and Accesses

Listers Lane (Western End)

The existing Listers Lane intersects the Golconda Road and continues across the rail line and then travels west to connect onto West Minstone Road. The proposed new road will not provide a connection of this western portion of Listers Lane onto the proposed road. The section of the Golconda Road south of Listers Lane would still connect to the western end of Listers Lane and will still provide a local access road loop via West Minstone Road back into Scottsdale.

A junction onto the proposed road to connect to the western end of Listers Lane and the Golconda Road to the south has not been included. This was to reduce the number of heavy vehicles and general access vehicles through the narrow local street network. It will also remove a rail crossing from an arterial road.

Service Road (Ch.12230m)

A service road with access to the proposed road at Ch.12230m has been included to maintain access to two houses and several paddocks. The service road would be required, as the level difference at these existing accesses to the proposed road would prevent direct access onto the proposed road. This service road utilises a section of Listers Lane that would have become redundant with the construction of the proposed road.

Bridport Main Road Junction

The existing junction of Listers Lane onto the Bridport Main Road will be upgraded to allow for the expected increase in traffic at the junction. It is proposed that a dedicated right turn lane and a left turn deceleration lane will be provided. This will ensure uninterrupted through vehicle movement particularly for heavy vehicles travelling on the Bridport Main Road. As a part of upgrading the junction, improvements to the pavement surface drainage and layout of traffic islands and other traffic facilities will be included. It is expected that these works can be undertaken predominantly within the existing road reservation.

Minor Farm Accesses

In addition to the above accesses and junctions there are a number of other minor farm accesses located within the site. The minor farm accesses on the southern side of Listers Lane between the new service road access at Ch.12230m and the junction onto Golconda Road shall be closed as the level difference at these existing accesses to the proposed road would prevent direct access onto the proposed road. All of the remaining minor farm accesses shall be maintained and in some cases these accesses shall be upgraded to provide safe entry to the proposed road.

Service Relocations

Water Main

The only existing council water main that is located within the site is at the Bridport Main Road junction. The proposed works will not significantly impact this water main.

Telstra

There are existing Telstra optical fibre and copper lines within the site. The optical fibre cables will not be significantly impacted on by the proposed work. There are several locations where the local copper cables will need to be relocated clear of the earthworks.

Aurora

There are existing Aurora overhead services along the full length of the site along with several overhead crossings of the road.

There are several locations where the Aurora poles will need to be relocated clear of the earthworks and to provide sufficient clear width to the road for safety. In addition to the relocated poles there shall be new poles installed at the Bridport Main Road junction to allow for lighting of the junction.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Environmental Issues

Botanical, faunal habitat and heritage surveys have been undertaken for the site. The heritage survey found that there are no recorded Aboriginal heritage sites within the actual study area and no sites of historic heritage significance listed on any of the heritage registers.

Although no flora of State or National conservation significance was located in the area, existing vegetation may provide some suitable habitat for several species of conservation significance.

Infestations of the Declared Weeds blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*) and broom (*Cytisus scoparius* / *Genista monspessulina*) were found to occur along the edges of Golconda Road. These weeds will need to be treated prior to commencement of construction.

Property Issues

Bissett Family / Listers Lane P/L

The property owned by the Bissett Family is contained in several land titles and is located either side of Listers Lane from Bridport Main Road to Golconda Road. The property currently has approximately 16 minor paddock accesses onto Listers Lane.

Most paddocks having at least two accesses onto Listers Lane to limit the distance and time that stock are on Listers Lane when crossing.

While stock crossing on an arterial road is not ideal it is intended to retain the accesses where possible to minimise the road impact on the operation of the farm and the time that stock is on the road.

The construction of the new dam wall for the crossing of Hurst Creek will provide a significant increase in the volume of water that can be stored in this dam. The existing dam holds 7.5ML, while the proposed dam will hold approximately 23ML. A low flow bypass shall be installed in the dam to limit the actual volume of water that is held to the current licensed quantity. This will enable the actual volume of water that can be held in the dam to be increased very easily if the licensed quantity is increased. The Bissett family is currently applying for a licence to increase storage capacity.

Other Properties Adjacent to the Site

There are a number of other properties adjacent to the Golconda Road and Listers Lane. The impact of the proposed road on these properties is expected to be minor with any acquisition required being narrow strips off the frontage to the road. All of the current accesses to these properties will be maintained and in some cases these accesses shall be upgraded to provide safe entry to the proposed road

Planning Approval

The project area is located in the Dorset municipality and within the jurisdiction of the Dorset Planning Scheme 1996. The Department in cooperation with the Dorset Council have obtained an amendment to the Dorset Planning Scheme to provide a 100m wide corridor along the route within which a road can be constructed as a permitted activity. This process was chosen by DIER to provide the local community with the opportunity to raise concerns and provide comments and input to the project at an early stage in the design process.

Public Consultation

This project is the result of an extensive public consultation process for the NETAS planning study and all potentially affected property owners have been contacted and have been asked for input into the process.

A public display of the proposed design will be provided at the Dorset Council offices at Scottsdale.

There have been discussions with the affected property owners to determine what accommodation works are necessary and to enable acquisition of necessary land. Every effort has been made to ensure that individual concerns have been addressed where possible.

CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM AND COSTS

Construction Program

Construction is programmed to commence in January 2005, with completion anticipated by March 2006.

Costs

This project is being jointly funded by the State and Federal governments with each government responsible for 50% of the project budget. The Federal Government funding is to be provided from the Roads of National Importance (RONI) program.

The major project components and estimated costs are as follows:

Earthworks (excluding dam)	\$0.5M
Retaining Walls	\$0.5M
Hurst Creek Dam	\$0.8M
Drainage	\$0.3M
Pavement	\$0.7M
Sealing	\$0.1M
Traffic Facilities	\$0.3M
Aurora and Telstra Service Relocations	\$0.1M
Miscellaneous	\$0.3M
Acquisition	\$0.2M
Professional Fees for Design, Contract Administration and DIER	\$0.5M
TOTAL	\$4.3M

EVIDENCE

The Committee commenced its inquiry on Tuesday, 5 October last with an inspection of the site of the proposed works. The Committee then returned to the Dorset Council Chambers, whereupon the following witnesses appeared, made the Statutory Declaration and were examined by the Committee in public:-

- Greg Millar - Manager Project Services - Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources
- Denise McIntyre - Land Transport Planner - Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources
- John Martin, Manager, Corporate Services, Dorset Municipal Council
- Leslie Bissett
- Glen Moore

Overview

Mr Millar gave the following overview of the project:-

I will run through the project, commencing at the junction of Bridport Main Road and Listers Road, explaining the main points of the project moving through the works.

At the Bridport Main Road-Listers Road junction, the intention is to upgrade that junction to provide a dedicated left-turn lane and right-turn lane for vehicles travelling from Scottsdale into Listers Lane and from Bridport into Listers Lane. The original intention was not to provide a left deceleration lane but in consultation with the residents at that junction the noise issue was raised and providing the left-turn deceleration lane will eliminate the necessity for any cars following the left-turners having to brake. With two lanes being provided, it effectively allows for free flow of traffic on the Bridport Main Road. That junction also will be finished off in an asphalt seal to reduce the impact of noise at the junction. From the junction, moving down Listers Lane, there is a proposal not to do any works on the following 750 metres of Listers Lane, which is a fairly recently constructed local road by Dorset Council. There is adequate width on that road and the pavement is in fairly good condition.

Moving down towards the end of Listers Lane, we then commence the new construction work, which involves a significant cut through a curve down across the Hurst Creek valley where there is a significant fill. The fill impacts on one of the dams but in the design work there is potential for increased capacity within those dams, subject to application by the property owners for that additional capacity. Part of Listers Lane in that area is being retained to give access to two properties that would otherwise have to negate what would be something like a 10-metre cut. It was more prudent to retain the existing road as a service road to those properties. Originally the alignment was a much-greater sweeping curve that had a significant impact on the farming operations for the property in that area. We have brought it back closer to the existing Listers Road alignment.

Moving down through the valley itself, where there are a number a dams, the intention is to remain with the existing road alignment because there is a relatively narrow corridor through there that is available to us. The extra width is being obtained by pushing into the embankment, which feeds up to the railway line at the top of that embankment. We are looking for a natural cut situation; where that is not achievable, we are providing retaining walls. This would enable us to put guard fencing along that entire valley to protect any errant vehicles from the steep drop into the dams themselves.

The project finishes shortly after the end of the dam on a relatively straight section of road. It does not preclude any future options, which may be investigated beyond that point. The project that is before the committee in itself is very much sustainable as a stand-alone project. The total cost of the work we estimate at \$4.3 million.

The Committee questioned the witnesses regarding the movement of heavy vehicles through Scottsdale. The witnesses responded:-

Mr MILLAR - I think it will be safer for both larger vehicles and the normal travelling public in that there will be extra width on that road. As I have already pointed out, there will be additional safety features such as a guard fence to protect any vehicles from those hazards.

Ms McINTYRE - The other thing is that, at the moment, the Golconda Road leads traffic into the narrow town streets of Scottsdale. With Listers Lane as part of the major road network, that brings people onto major roads and takes them out of the narrow side streets, and sorts out existing traffic management issues, one would think.

Mr MILLAR - There is another safety issue, too, which should be considered with the alignment that we are proposing. At the present moment the existing Golconda Road coming into Scottsdale crosses a railway crossing, with no protection on it, so the adoption of this route would therefore eliminate that safety issue as well.

Accesses

The Committee questioned the witnesses regarding sighting distances for accesses and to what extent the Department would maintain such accesses. The witnesses responded:-

Mr MILLAR - Most of the accesses are on Listers Lane, and particularly in the section marked we will not be reconstructing them - they will stay as is. The road itself, and therefore any sight considerations, has been designed for a 80 kph design standard and we have looked to meet those sorts of standards...

Ms McINTYRE - We have considered this at length and under normal circumstances we would attempt to remove all access or all paddock access to a State road where we are undertaking works. In this case we accept that the farm is managed both sides of the road and that the access is an easy crossing and short lengths of time on the road are required to maintain the existing farm management. We can say that, as long as there are no safety issues in the future, they will remain and be used as they are currently.

Later in evidence, the Committee questioned the witnesses as to whether underpasses could be constructed to alleviate the concerns of farms affected by the closure of gates. Ms McIntyre responded:-

We would certainly look at something like that, if that ever occurred. We would look at it in the context of the safety issue. We have farm gates onto major highways all around the State and they don't cause any problems. I was expressing a worst-case scenario that I can't guarantee forever, but in that worst-case scenario, if there was a safety issue, we would have to look at it. We don't look at it and say, 'This is what we're going to do', we negotiate with owners, so the result will be something they can live with as well.

Movement of farming traffic

In light of representations made from property owners and transport companies, the Committee questioned the witnesses as to what consideration had been given to the matter of the movement of farming traffic through the township necessitated by the closure of West Minstone Road. Mr Millar responded:-

There is an offer there to the landowners that we would be prepared to construct a farm track to at least alleviate their difficulty, which would take them from Listers Lane to the existing old Golconda Road. It is true that there would be other people who would then not have that particular access but the numbers involved, I suspect, are relatively small. Those numbers have never been quantified by any parties.

Route Options

The Committee sought evidence as to the process undertaken to determine the optimum route for traffic into the North-East. Ms McIntyre responded:-

This has been decided, through a series of studies, as being the strategic route for the future economic development of the north-east of the State. It is considered to be the most direct route. That is where we are at and that is where this project has come from. We can't force people to use this and we certainly don't intend to force trucks onto this road immediately. It is considered that as improvements occur people will be encouraged to use this road over, say, The Sideling. Bridport Main Road is a different issue. In terms of connection between Launceston and the north-east, the more work we can do on this road, the more attractive it will become and the more it will be used. It is already established as being a tourist route to the north-east; it is already nationally advertised as the touring route.

The Committee asked why 'Option A' had been rejected as it appears to have avoided farm land and provided a better connection to Bridport. Ms McIntyre responded:-

It was rejected through the consultation process for a number of reasons. At the end of the first study it rated very low - in fact, it rated fourth in the four options, A, B, C and D. It rated the lowest of all the options in terms of a better approach to Scottsdale. Scottsdale is regarded as the focal point and where the productivity is coming through. Bridport is a residential and recreational area predominantly, so the focal point is Scottsdale. Oakdene Road, in that vicinity, is several kilometres away from Scottsdale. There were amenity issues for residents. There were a number of small holdings in that area. It would have meant a total road construction. We were looking at constructing roads from Glen Moore Park through to Scottsdale, so it would have been a total new alignment. The council would have been left with their safety issue through the dams. There were a number of factors involved in the decision.

The Committee sought the costings and road lengths of the other options. Ms McIntyre responded:-

... This is high-level conceptual costing and they may not be terribly relevant because we've moved on and we have a lot more information.

... This is straight from the NETAS study ... Scottsdale A was 13.79 kilometres and \$8.5 million; Scottsdale B was 11.04 kilometres and \$9.02 million; Scottsdale D was 11.04 kilometres and \$8.2 million; and existing road upgrade was 12.73 kilometres and \$6.76 million. We now have a western approaches to Scottsdale project, which is 9.5 kilometres in total length. The first section of that is the \$4.3 million project we are looking at now.

The Committee sought to know whether alternatives, requiring significantly less engineering work in the area of the dam and gully had been considered. The witnesses responded:-

Mr MILLAR - ... To get down to that level you would still need significant earthworks. You might recall that the existing Listers Lane goes along the straight fairly sharply to the left and effectively goes down the face of the escarpment to reach the existing valley alignment. You still have to get from the level of the existing Listers Lane down to the level of the Golconda Road at the bottom of those dams. I would suggest that you are still looking at significant engineering works to achieve that. Also, I image that it could have a similar impact on the existing farming operation that the current proposed alignment would have.

Ms McINTYRE - The initial road alignment that we had through that area looped out further into the Bissett property and removed the need for a structure, and it was a much better grade. After consultation with the family and listening to their concerns, we had our designers look at this whole area again. That is when they came up with this alignment, which is a steeper grade and includes the dam structure. Our initial proposal was for a gently-sweeping curve through and around the dam.

Fitness Track

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to the detail of the fitness track to be included in the project. Mr Millar responded:-

Currently, as I understand it, it is quite a popular walk to do a circuit out of Scottsdale, down Listers Lane and back along the old Golconda Road. That was raised at an earlier stage and we are quite prepared to keep that facility. That is why it is being provided. There are quite a few people who already do that circuit and we saw no reason why they shouldn't in the future be able to do that.

... we'd be looking at forming a gravel footpath (for the fitness track) ... through that area.

Dorset Council

Mr Martin made the following submission to the Committee on behalf of the Dorset Council:-

... I will take a step back - and it's referred to in council's submission - there are three main strategic road routes into the north-east. One is down to Bridport, across the top to George Town and down the East Tamar Highway; the second is the Lilydale-Golconda; and the third is the Tasman Highway. Part of council's submission is that we have referred to reports that have been done on some or all of these routes over the last 17 to 20 years. Every single one of them - and I will make available a copy of the council's submission to the public after this has finished, with the committee's approval - refers to the upgrading of the Lilydale-Golconda main road as the main strategic road route into the north-east. Without going into a lot of detail about the reasons why and why not, there is a lot of engineering, economic and social analysis, what the route will affect in terms of going into Launceston or Scottsdale - travelling times, cost factors and all those sorts of things.

But where council originally came from was that the north-east, or anywhere in the State for that matter, cannot afford to have three strategic main road routes into one region. We have to have one strategic road route into the north-east. We cannot afford, as a State, to have freight routes all over the place. So what we have been pushing for probably the last eight or 10 years - a lot more than we have before that - is to say, 'Which route are we going to recommend and why?'. That is a result of some of the studies that have been done, particularly in recent times. When you look at a map you will see that going down to Bridport, across the top and down to Launceston and then on down to Hobart, up the north-west coast or wherever freight transport has to go, it is a pretty long way. Going over The Sideling or down through Lilydale, there is probably not much difference. So further analysis was done on those particular routes. There have been traffic counts done; there have been economic analyses and benefit cost ratios done. In those reports that I have referred to there is a lot of that data. The last report that was done - the NETAS - all that information is in there. There has been a freight demand analysis done of where freight is travelling to and why and the economic benefits and those types of things. That was done by the department - a freight demand survey - last October or November, I think. If you have a copy of that, you would be surprised at just how much freight traffic is coming into and out of the north-east of Tasmania.

There is a real imperative from council's perspective on behalf of their community and for the future of their community that we get this right and we get it undertaken as quickly as possible. There has been a lot of procrastination over the last 30 or 40 years about which route. In fact, the council and the community in the north-east could never decide, so it was a pretty easy decision by successive governments over many years to say, 'Oh well, they can't decide. We won't do anything', or, 'We'll just do a little bit here and a little bit there'. That is where we are coming from. We think there is a lot of potential in the north-east to improve our existing forestry and agricultural industries in particular, but apart from that there is our growing

tourism industry. That is why we see it as a real imperative to get this route right and upgraded to a category 2 road. We think there have been enough analyses and reports done. We have information coming out of our ears in terms of why it should be the Lilydale-Golconda main road route. Our submission covers that, I think, reasonably adequately.

Our submission refers to eight of those studies - and I will not regurgitate what you have already read. I think it covers most of those types of things that I spoke about. They all recommend the upgrading of the Lilydale-Golconda main road. There has been a view that there might need to be another study done, or there should be further work done, or there should be further traffic counts. Council thinks there has already been enough of that sort of stuff done. The last study cost us over \$400 000 and that is a lot of money in anyone's terms. We think that to do any more studies on whether The Sideling or the Lilydale-Golconda main road should be used is an absolute waste of money. Therefore, that is council's decision in terms of recommending that the projects that have been identified need to start as soon as possible. We have already had one major industry leave in the last couple of years and one of the reasons, I would suggest, is the cost of transport. B-doubles have to go the long way round wherever they go in this State, whether it is the north-west or down to Hobart or to Bell Bay or wherever. We see that this is the most strategic route, apart from the economic and engineering analyses that have already been done, to carry forward and improve the economic and social fundamentals of the north-east into the future.

I think it is also worthwhile to touch on the social fundamentals because at the moment the three routes have major problems in terms of safety for the ordinary travelling public, so the sooner we do something that improves the safety aspects for our elderly and our schoolchildren travelling between here and Launceston, the better. At the moment they are competing on every single route on inadequate widths and dangerous curves and those types of things with the heavy vehicles we have in the north-east and we are always going to have because of the types of industries here. We see that continued reviews are only hindering existing and future industries and economic and social development for the north-east.

Letters have been sent to politicians. Mrs Napier is aware, as are other politicians who are here, of what we have said so I don't need to go over that any further. We see that this project is linked to all that information we have provided and it needs to start as soon as possible. I am not qualified to talk about the engineering aspects; I think you have already covered most of those adequately. The other thing is the consultations with the affected landowners and those types of things. I think that needs to occur between DIER officers, because this will become a State road. The main thing that council is concerned about at the end of the day is that if there is any loss of agricultural economy or land, the landowners themselves are adequately compensated. Or, if there is an ability to assist to improve their operations, that is taken into account as well.

With my experience - and I have been involved with this for a long time - I don't think that any of the questions that have been asked today should unduly delay this. We have heard them all before and I think they have already been answered before in reports. It is unfortunate as well that officers change from time to time within the department, so Denise and Greg haven't been involved with this project over the last eight or nine years, as I have been. Some of the difficulties that they encountered in answering some of the questions were because of that factor.

... In our partnership agreement with the State, one of the items is to discuss the handover requirements or the swapping of roads and those details are yet to be worked out. One other comment I might make, Mr Chairman, is that in terms of the \$20 million obviously there will be a lot more needed to upgrade this road to an adequate category 2 highway so it can take B-double access. It is probably in the order of \$60 million or \$70 million or something like that, but \$20 million is a good start. We will be looking for further assistance because you can't just do a section of the road and put B-doubles on it.

... I think it's in the interest of everyone who lives in the north-east that we get a decent category 2 highway as quickly as possible. I would like it done tomorrow, I think council would like it done tomorrow and I think the whole north-east community would like it done tomorrow, but realistically I think we are looking at a time frame of, unfortunately, up to 10 years. If we can expedite it as quickly as possible, I think that would be in everyone's interest. It was interesting to listen to the conversation in relation to the economic benefit cost ratios and things like that. That is on the existing route. We think that once you upgrade it to category 2 highway standard the benefit cost ratios would be something more towards three.

Bissett family interests

Mr Bissett made the following submission to the Committee:-

Firstly, on behalf of Fred and Graham, my father and brother on the other side of the room, who trade together with me as Listers Lane Pty Ltd, I would like to thank you all for this opportunity to present this submission. We have major concerns with this route that is proposed through Lilydale and feel that it is not the best route to service and meet the needs of the Scottsdale community. The process used to decide on this route was flawed right from the start, as Dorset Council staff and members were not interested in any other option. One of the original members of the first steering committee has told us that they pulled out of the committee because of the tunnel vision and lack of interest in looking at other routes on the part of council staff.

This particular route has been claimed as a trucking route but, as I picked up today and also in negotiations with various people over time, it was a trucking route; it changes to a tourist route; it goes back to a trucking route - it seems to depend on who you are talking to on the particular day as to what traffic will use this route. We know the trucking industry is against this route. Lilydale Road is very unsuitable for trucks as there are so many hills and

valleys that constantly need negotiating. We also understand that Launceston City Council does not favour this route as the truck traffic using this road will have to pass through the centre of Launceston city.

We feel that there has been no avenue of protest available to anyone who is affected by this route, as we were promised by DIER, even though we have worked with DIER and we appreciate the work done by Denise and the different staff we have worked with. We had been led to believe that there would be a chance to protest about this road right through the whole process. Basically we have tried to do so, but we have got nowhere because there has not been any avenue. We feel that Scottsdale council and DIER management are bulldozing this route through without any consideration of the practicalities for those affected by the road.

One thing we have noticed is that there has not been one Scottsdale councilor come to us and talk to us. We have been to one or two and, yes, they have showed minimal interest, but we feel that as far as Scottsdale council is concerned, our concerns have been totally wiped. It got back to us that at one stage our mayor said to those people who are going to be affected, 'Well, this is \$10 million'. We think that is a very poor comment.

We do agree that there is a need for a new approach to Scottsdale. However, we are still very strongly opposed to this route being chosen when we consider that there are other routes that could be investigated and used for this approach. Our major objections to this route are for the following reasons:

- the taking of prime agricultural land
- the effect this route will have on our farming operation
- the effect this route will have on other farming operations within the Dorset municipality; and
- the effect on the intersection with Bridport Road and George Street and on those living in that area.

Let me deal with each matter in more detail.

First, the taking of prime agricultural land. As prime agricultural land is very limited within the Dorset municipality, and in Tasmania in general, we feel that it is quite absurd to take away more of this valuable resource to be put under road construction and thus be lost forever for its original purpose. We feel we have a responsibility to future generations to preserve this irreplaceable resource and the land along each side of Listers Lane, even though it is ours, is among some of the best agricultural land available in this area. We feel that the whole environmental debate is so unbalanced. We believe that prime agricultural land is just as big a threatened species as many of the endangered animals and trees. At least the animals and trees may have the opportunity to be reproduced, but not so with prime agricultural land - once it is used it is gone forever.

Secondly, the effect on our farming operation. This new western approach to Scottsdale will affect our farming operation immensely. We own and operate one of the larger farming operations in Scottsdale, with land on both sides of the new approach and this new highway will split our operation in two. [Slide] This is a map of our farming operation: the blue lines are our farming boundaries. Listers Lane is the red line that runs through the centre. On the northern side of the highway we farm some 173 acres, being the full length of Listers Lane, except for a small area that is owned by David and Vivienne Clough. On the southern side we operate about two-thirds of the length of Listers Lane and this amounts to a further 117 acres. This is a total of 290 acres on both sides of the road, and we feel that a new highway through the middle of this farming operation would drastically reduce the value of our property. If we chose to sell the operation in the future, would adequate compensation be paid to compensate for such a loss? The green lines on the map are our paddocks.

Our major concerns with this route are that we will need continued access for our stock and farm machinery to be able to cross Listers Lane at any time. As our farming operation is facing both sides of the road, it is a long, narrow holding and the farm does not lend itself to internal laneways. The simplest, most effective way to move both cattle and sheep is across the road and through the gates into each paddock. We have some 19 gates and entrances strategically placed along to route to minimise the time spent on the road and to make this operation as quick and safe as possible. DIER have told us at this stage they will allow us to keep these accesses, but our concern is, with this being a major highway, will this change in the future?

Mention was made this morning of underpasses. As we have talked with DIER we have been told that underpasses are not a solution in this particular area because of the lie of the ground. If underpasses were to be used, DIER would have to take more of our agricultural land and make laneways along each side of the road, and then try to make an underpass under a road which is basically level at present.

The farm machinery access is another concern. The operation includes the production of beans, carrots, onions, poppies and potatoes, and these gates and entrances are needed to facilitate the quick and easy movement of tractors, trucks, large farm machinery and harvesters into these production areas. [Slide] The yellow dots on the map there show where all our gates are along each side of the road, and when we are moving stock from one paddock to another, we use the shortest route possible. We have put those gates basically in every corner of the paddock on the road so that there is more or less a diagonal movement from one paddock to the next.

How long will DIER allow us to continue to use these gates and entrances, especially when it is inevitable that red mud will get on the highway? At present we do our best to keep dirt off the highway but, as everyone knows, it is almost impossible at times to keep that red mud off the highways. We are worried that as soon as we get a situation with mud on the highway, DIER will be on our backs.

[Slide] This is the irrigation situation. The map here shows our present dams - the five orange rectangles, and the dotted line that comes from the second dam is the underground irrigation main that is also in situ at the moment. The gates also allow us access to the

irrigation machinery, to the dams that serve our cropping operation. With the present design, we will have one dam replaced and we are working with the designers of the road for the new road to become the new dam wall. Will the necessary dam approvals be easy to obtain? These can take anything up to two years. We have had a dam approval in to have this particular dam enlarged for two years now, but because of the road situation that approval has not gone through. Rivers and Water Supply won't do anything with it until they know what is happening with the road. They also have concerns about ownership of the dam - whether we own the dam or DIER owns the dam. Also the applications - who has to put them in? DIER said this morning it was our responsibility; Rivers and Water Supply tell us it is DIER's responsibility. So that is a major problem that we feel needs sorting out.

The underground main that services two parts of our operation will be replaced, but our major concern is having enough water to carry out our 2005 irrigation season on the southern side of Listers Lane and having the work completed in time so that it doesn't affect our 2005 poppy program. The overall problem of irrigation water on a highway will also have to be dealt with.

Another point to our farming operation is the situation where David and Vivienne Clough live on the bottom of the arrow [Slide] and where the little dots go there is to be a loop road, which comes off the new highway back onto Listers Lane. Our concern is that this is another slice of productive land being taken out of the area.

The continued access to the West Minstone Road is another concern of ours as far as our farming operation is concerned. We have a further property over on the Tasman Highway which is the hexagon at the bottom [Slide] and if this new approach is put in place we will lose access to West Minstone Road, meaning that we will have take all our farm machinery and harvesters through the township of Scottsdale thus creating dangerous situations there. We also have a contract potato seed cutting operation on Listers Lane and all the potatoes are sourced from Jondi Cool Store, which is also marked there and which is on East Minstone Road. We cart some 1 000 tonnes of potatoes on this route along West Minstone Road and Listers Lane, and if access is denied, that will also have to come right through Scottsdale.

Our third concern is the effect that this route will have on other farming operations within the Dorset municipality. Listers Lane and West Minstone Road are also used by quite a number of farmers as an important bypass to Scottsdale. These farmers also use these roads to take their farm machinery and harvesters from Jetsonville to Springfield and beyond so that they do not have to go through Scottsdale. I estimate that there would be some 20 farmers and contractors who would use this route constantly. You might go there today and see no-one use it, but it is one of those things - it is an occasional use, but overall the number of times it is used throughout the year would be a lot. We wonder what route Dorset Council would like these farmers to use once this highway is constructed. Perhaps Coplestone Street past the high school; perhaps Ellenor Street past the council offices; or the only other choice, down King Street through the business centre.

Our fourth concern is the intersection with Bridport Road and George Street. This intersection will become much more congested even though DIER are planning quite a few changes. It will also be possibly dangerous, as people will have to choose at the bottom of the

hill whether their proposed route will be Launceston or Bridport. I have been pushed down that hill in a tractor by log trucks, and I know what sort of an experience it is, trying to get off that road as a log truck wants to go down Bridport Road. Believe me, it is not very nice. I also understand that DIER are restricting the people in the house on the corner and those in some of the other houses down that side of the road, and not allowing them to have any cars parked outside their houses. That creates another issue there as to parking for those residents. Also, there is the issue of those residents having to back out onto a slip lane with traffic coming down the road. So there is a safety issue there too.

The intersection will also be noisy for residents in the area as the heavy trucks use their exhaust brakes to slow down to negotiate the intersection, and then accelerate as they leave it.

Dorset Council and DIER are pushing this route for the reason that Listers Lane has already been constructed as a heavy vehicle route. As I mentioned earlier, its use - heavy vehicle route/tourist route - keeps changing. We feel a study should be done on the use of Listers Lane because very few trucks are using it, choosing instead to use the present Bridport Road so that they can access Flinders Highway between Bridport and Bell Bay. When you talk to many of the truck drivers, their comment is, 'We won't use a new highway because the present route is the most appropriate; it is flat and we don't have to change our gears. We would much rather travel the Flinders Highway because it is a much more economical route to use than the Lilydale Road.' The use of these roads will increase when Simplot start transporting their 50 000 tonnes of potatoes to Ulverstone and the drivers prefer to use the Flinders Highway to reach their destination.

In February while working a paddock on the corner of both these routes, I counted three trucks in five hours used Listers Lane, whereas in one hour 15 different trucks, semi-trailers and B-doubles used Bridport Road. The climb on Campbells Hill on Bridport Road is another reason why the council has discounted this route, but 95 per cent of all truck traffic today is using Bridport Road and Campbells Hill has proved no barrier to their movement.

We don't want to get into the debate as to whether Lilydale Road or The Sideling should be the preferred route for this new highway. However, as we understand that Lilydale Road is the chosen route, we would request that Scottsdale A option be revisited as this seems to be a much more effective route into Scottsdale. We understand that the Dorset Council discounted this route because it adds a little further distance into Scottsdale than the present chosen route. Many, including council, are calling for the upgrading of Bridport Main Road - and I understand that if the Howard Government is re-elected, there have already been funds allocated to some work to be done on Bridport Road - and this will probably be done in the near future, so why not use Scottsdale A to bring a new route through to this area and make the connection where there is plenty of room on non-agricultural land. As Bridport is fast becoming a satellite town of Scottsdale, this junction would enable common use by both towns for access into Launceston.

We feel that the Scottsdale A option would also be an answer to many of the problems that are already addressed. There is no prime agricultural land to be acquired for this route, as it is all crown land. It would not need any of the large excavation work and the railway stabilisation work that needs to be done on Listers Lane. It would not affect our farming

operations in any way. The loss of the dam, its reconstruction and the concerns for the 2005 season would be eliminated. The important access route along Listers Lane and West Minstone Road for ourselves and other farmers would be maintained, thus eliminating the need for harvesters and farm equipment to be taken through Scottsdale streets, thus making the town safer. The intersection with Bridport Road where Scottsdale A would join on could be made much safer with roundabouts, loop entrances on and off the Bridport Road and not having any problems with residents. The noise problems for residents would also be fixed because the traffic would just go straight through and it would be a lot different from what it is today.

We feel that it would be a smoother, much straighter and much safer route into Scottsdale. We feel that if this route were chosen, the money would be spent more effectively. Leigh Barrett, who designed the road, told us that at this stage he has spent over \$1 million on this piece around our dam - a 400-500-metre section. We feel that the money could be spent much more effectively on a new route.

DIER made the comment this morning that Scottsdale A was dismissed because it was a cost of \$8.5 million. I make that a saving of nearly \$5 million by using Scottsdale A. That is the only way that I read it this morning. Yes, Scottsdale A will take the road a little bit out of Scottsdale. They mentioned that it was 13.9 kilometres long, but I cannot understand that because when you look from Blumont Park through to the area where it would come, you can see that it is not that far, so it must be an optical illusion

Also if this particular part of the road is approved, the land and the environmental issues of the next section which you guys will shortly have to face would be also discounted. They would be addressed because the road wouldn't be coming into the area where Mr Kettle and the Turner family are being affected, again with agricultural land being used.

The Committee questioned Mr Bissett as to whether he had estimated the affect the works would have on the market value of his property. He replied:-

(Whilst it hadn't been calculated) We think it would be significant. The fact that the operation is split would make it quite significant, I would think. Yes, we probably have got the option of selling one side of the road and then the other, but we don't know the future and at this stage we have no plans for selling. It has never been discussed.

The Committee sought clarification from Mr Bissett regarding the issue of stock underpasses to service his needs. Mr Bissett responded:-

That was one of the reasons why I think DIER has come to the decision that they will leave the gates where they are. The end where the major work of Listers Lane is going to be done, the cutting is too far down to get an underpass anyway and back up on that piece that they are not touching at the present stage it is level so it means they have to still get down under the road to take land out each side of the road to be able to make an underpass.

... Where the new dam is to be built the spillway is to become a stock underpass at the same time and I understand it is big enough to be able to drive a tractor through as well. So it is a dam spillway, the underpass that they are working on.

(Regarding the proposal to provide access through a lane at the west end side) We feel it is an option, ... but there again where does it go? The only place where we feel it could come it is going to run into the railway line without a lot of difficulty. We are not so much concerned about ourselves - yes, it is going to affect us - but we are more concerned about the other farmers who use that road as a bypass and the fact that machinery is going to have to come through Scottsdale. We can put a road through to get ourselves through or DIER will put a road through us, as they have offered, but it still doesn't get over the situation of other farmers using that road for their machinery.

As to the need for a principal route from Launceston, Mr Bissett submitted:-

We definitely see the need for a new road into Scottsdale, Brenton. There is no question about that - we definitely need it. But we feel this is more the issue of coming through Listers Lane in this particular area when we feel that Scottsdale A gets completely away from agricultural land and that sort of thing and doesn't make major alterations to the route. It will still come into Scottsdale in the same way, but it will perhaps be even straighter into Scottsdale in that it would not have to come to the corner of Listers Lane and wait and then go up the hill again.

Community consultation

Mr Martin made the following submission in relation to the process of community consultation:

... I just wanted to touch on a couple of comments that were made and make some comments from a council perspective. Mr Bissett earlier indicated in his opening address that some of the processes may have been flawed, that council staff were not interested in any other route and those types of things. Just for the record I would just like to clear up that council's position, right from the start, was that we want a category 2 highway access into the north-east. That was our position.

Where it was did not matter. We just wanted a decent road up here for the benefit of economic and social development into the future. But when you go back and have a look at the studies that have been done and the processes that I have been involved in on behalf of council - and I am the only person in this room who has been involved in all the studies that have been undertaken in the last 11 years, and that includes the Northern Integrated Transport Plan of which Launceston City Council is a member, as is every other council in the north of the State - you will see that they clearly outlined that the Lilydale-Golconda Main Road is the preferred route. So on the basis of that information, which has been reported to council, council has formed their

opinion and there has been no bias in it. There would be no sense in any council officer or councillor for that matter favouring one route over the other.

The second point I want to make is that when we got down to the detail of looking at the things in the NETAS study, there is extensive community consultation undertaken as part of that study. That was one of the reasons why it cost so much money and when it came to the access into Scottsdale, whether it was part A, B, C, D or whatever, again councillors or council staff - particularly me - had no preferred option about whether it should go here or there or whatever. We left the economic and the engineering analyses undertaken by the department and its consultant, to spell those things out for us.

There were also some public presentations made here at Scottsdale outlining the proposals before they were finally given as a final recommendation and there has also been the opportunity for everyone to participate and to give comments, written submissions or whatever, over a long period of time in those processes that have been undertaken. Now, if people had not seen them, we - and when I say we, I mean the department - cannot do any more than advertise and put as much information in the paper as we can.

Council from its perspective has continued to provide information to the press, particularly the local press, about what is happening, where we are, what stage we are at, et cetera, so that there is the opportunity for the community to read it. If they see something there they do not like, there is every opportunity to come back to council or the department. We have particularly asked them to go to the department because the department is now at the stage where they are handling these types of things and not the council.

Also I would like to point out that when I first became aware that there were some options without going into Scottsdale and that the most likely outcome could be through option D or something that might affect the Bissetts' property, I personally contacted the landowner so it would not be a surprise when it came out. As soon as I was aware, I rang up the landowners and let them know and I actually discussed it with Mr Bissett in the office here to say, 'This is a possibility. It is not certain yet, but it might affect your property.'

... I think Mr Bissett's words were that it would go through his property. At that particular point in time there was no conclusion that it would. I knew that it would come through these types of stages and that there should be every opportunity for Mr Bissett to say something about what was and had been occurring. I can also mention that, from the mayor's perspective and in his absence, he has consulted with me on every occasion when we were talking about the road. I have been the principal officer involved when it comes to talking about it publicly, putting out media releases or putting letters together. I can say from my perspective that in those discussions with the mayor he never had a preference for A, B, C, D or whatever. He let the conclusions be made by the economic, engineering and social types of analysis being undertaken. As far as the comments about \$10 million and those types of things are concerned, I

have not personally heard him say that. He might have done, but I am going on the objective things that I know about.

.... A couple of comments in relation to access that is currently used by Mr Bissett and others: council understand that if that access down West Minstone Road is closed off, they will need to access those properties down George Street and up through the main street. That is fully acknowledged by council. Farm machinery does that now. What council are saying is that we do not believe that it is an extra 50 per cent or an extra 25 per cent or something like that. We are saying that the impact is minimal.

... This Lilydale-Golconda route will fit into that forward-thinking strategy down the track so it is not as if these projects associated with that road will be a waste of money. Again, I referred to the Northern Integrated Transport Plan which has been signed off by all councils in the north of the State and DIER and which refers to the Lilydale-Golconda Main Road as the best strategic route into the north-east.

Alternative routes

In light of the evidence received by the Committee in relation to the alternative routes, and more specifically, what consideration was given to each, the Committee ordered the department to provide the following additional information:-

- Comparative traffic count data for: the Sideling; Listers Lane; and Bridport Main Road.
- The area of land to be acquired from the Bissett family for the project as submitted.
- Details of the benefit/cost ratios for each of the alternative corridor options.
- An estimate of the completion cost of the 14 km 'Sideling option' as an alternative to the proposal before the Committee, together with advice as to the category rating of that road were it to be completed.
- Regarding the Batman Bridge, advice as to the capacity and limitations of the bridge in terms of current and projected heavy freight transport.
- Copy of the most recent NETAS report.
- Copy of the GHD report into the alternative corridor options in relation to environmental, property, agricultural and land impact issues.
- Copy of the Pitt & Sherry report into the alternative corridor options in relation to traffic engineering, design and cost issues.

In addition, the Committee resolved to invite officers of GHD and Pitt & Sherry, competent to respond to questions relating to the studies abovementioned. The Committee resumed its inquiry on Friday, 15 October last. The following witnesses appeared:-

- Greg Millar - Manager Project Services - DIER
- Denise McIntyre - Land Transport Planner - DIER
- Leigh Barrett - Pitt & Sherry
- John Wadsley - GHD

Consultation process/alternative corridor options

Ms McIntyre made the following submission:

... In broad terms at the end of the stage 1 study Scottsdale option A rated the very lowest of all the other options. You have got plans for the A, B, D and existing alignment option. John can probably clarify a little bit about the process and the assessment process for those road options. At the end of the NETAS stage 1, Scottsdale A option was ranked lowest of all the other alternatives. At the end of that study the recommendations were accepted by the steering committee members - overall there are about 34 members.

Then the department internally gathered together a working group to look at the western approaches project. That working group consisted of people from the planning branch. They went through the recommendations of the NETAS study and some other options and came up with a selection of routes which were further assessed in those two reports that you asked for - those two subsequent reports that the western approaches to Scottsdale. At the end of the first study Oakdene Road or anything in that vicinity was discounted. I will get John to explain a little bit more about that before we get confused about why it was not included in the subsequent -

Mr Wadsley continued:-

GHD's main role was to look at corridor and road improvement options over the entire corridor from Rocherlea through to Scottsdale. At this end of the project study area we originally defined Scottsdale A, B and subsequently D. Scottsdale C was effectively just a realignment of Listers Road, so that was discounted as being a major deviation; it was really a specific road project. That is why C doesn't appear although it is discussed in our main report. When we were first considering Scottsdale A we looked at an alignment of Scottsdale A going straight down Oakdene Road to link onto Bridport Main Road. However, in discussions with the local community, and specifically the focus group that we set up for the Scottsdale area, there was a lot of opposition to that idea because of the number of private residential houses on small blocks at the eastern end of Oakdene Road. We then examined route options south of Oakdene Road, moving back towards Browns and Nations roads. The further south we went the further we moved into the area of prime agricultural land, which is defined under the State policy as class 1, 2 or 3 land. Most of that area from Oakdene Road back to Scottsdale itself is predominantly class 2 or 3 - very high quality land.

At the focus group there was a lot of opposition to any route option south of Oakdene Road going back to Nations Road, basically because of that farmland. We then investigated options further north of Oakdene Road and, as you can see, the route option there came out at Lauderdale Road, which was significantly further north than what was preferred by freight industry members who were on the steering committee. They also formed part of the focus group, including people like Trevor Hookway who was on the steering committee from the very beginning of the project right through to the end.

... We had eight focus groups set up during the project. Five of them were based on local communities such as Rocherlea, Lilydale, Lebrina-Wyena and Scottsdale. We also had a specific focus group for the freight industry and one for the Tunnel-Bangor area when we were looking at linking options across to the east Tamar Highway. We had a tourism group as well, I believe. The purpose of that was to try to broaden the discussion as much as possible within the community.

... We advertised in the local newspapers for those focus group members. We got the steering committee to nominate people. We went through a very intensive process of trying to select broadly representative groups. They were not public meetings, they were never intended to be, but they were designed to have a broad cross-section of opinion.

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to what objections were received in relation to option A. Mr Wadsley responded:-

'A' was the Scottsdale focus group, in terms of coming further south between Oakdene Road and Listers Road. Also, when we were considering options up around Lauderdale Road, the local council and freight industry representatives were fairly unimpressed because it was too far north. The problem was that to get a truck from, say, Scottsdale to start travelling down the Lilydale-Golconda corridor, for it to go all the way to Lauderdale Road was a significant distance to travel, particular as Campbells Hill on Bridport main road was in the middle of that. That is quite a substantial hill if you look at it from a heavy freight point of view. Certainly it was made clear to us ... as part of our assessment process - and it is quite a convoluted process - we had to compare the options, to basically compare apples with apples. We had to define the length of each deviation. So from Blumont Park at the western end to the junction of Listers Road and Bridport main road, which is the eastern end of our section, Scottsdale A option was some 13.8 kilometres.

When questioned as to how much of that 13.8 kilometres was the section of Bridport to Scottsdale road, Mr Wadsley responded:-

Approximately five kilometres ... There was also something like a kilometre just around Blumont Park where we were using the existing road. So Scottsdale A was nearly three kilometres longer than Scottsdale B. Now Scottsdale B, as shown on our maps there, effectively went from Blumont Park, coming back to the existing road at Mountain View, and then along Golconda Road and up Listers Road. The dashed-line option, which went along Nations Road, was discounted because of the fairly vehement opposition by the local farmers in that area to any road project which would affect substantial areas of prime agricultural land. That was option B. Option B, rather than going straight through onto Bridport main road, effectively came back in at Mountain View and then along Golconda and up Listers. So Scottsdale A was three kilometres longer.

If you look at the table for travel time and cost, comparing the various options, you can actually see that for heavy vehicles, the heavy vehicle operating cost across that link was 25 per cent higher than for Scottsdale B. That is a fairly substantial option if you think that is per truck, so every time a truck goes on there they were incurring costs of \$3, or 25 per cent higher than Scottsdale B. It became quite clear through our economic assessment and also through our qualitative assessment processes that Scottsdale A was really not sustainable, and certainly there was no-one whom I can recall who made significant representations to us - and there were plenty of opportunities - suggesting that Scottsdale A was the best route.

Scottsdale D, just for comparison, was an option which was flagged at the focus group meeting. We actually had not previously considered that. That was put up by Stephen Abraham who works for Padgett transport company. He was on our steering committee, and that was suggested. In fact, that was our recommended option through stage 1 of the process, but you have to understand that at that stage of this whole project we were only looking at a very strategic level in terms of engineering costs. Once they actually came to do engineering cost assessments, which Pitt and Sherry did, there were substantial costs involved to effectively creating a large embankment across the Golconda Road to link Scottsdale D with Listers. That is why we then went into that new review process where the current option that was before you came out as preferred.

Mr Wadsley continued with his evidence regarding the assessment of the options:-

... In order that we could assess the projects in a completely unbiased manner and in an independent way, we actually formed what was called the road assessment panel. The road assessment panel was 12 community representatives: six from the steering committee and one from each focus group. Those twelve members met over three days, not consecutive days but three days over about a three-week period, and worked for probably eight hours each day assessing about 18 or 19 deviation projects and 66 road improvement projects. It was a really tough ask for the community. We had to do a lot of preparation work in briefing them how to go through the assessment process. We actually used a technique called the goal achievement matrix process, which assesses engineering projects in terms of qualitative rather than quantitative measures.

... The GAM process. I am talking about stage 1 of the whole NETAS project, which is really I suppose the fundamental basis of where we are now and pf the whole process of community consultation.

The objectives and criteria that were defined under the GAM process were defined by the members of the steering committee. GHD facilitated the process but we did not define them; in fact we actually had a voting system. We went through a very convoluted process. It is fair to say that at the beginning of our study there was a lot of community opposition to any thought of road upgradings in different areas. They basically believed that the department had a game plan and we were just there as the front men to be put against the wall to be shot if no-one liked it. We made a strong point to the community, and it took a long time to win their trust, but we made it quite

plain that the department had never given us any instructions over which options were to come through.

There was a lot of opposition in the Lilydale area, not so much at the Scottsdale end, and that was really based on the fact that a number of bypass options had been flagged in the Lilydale community about 10 years previously. When we started the job we were not aware about them so we walked into a bit of a bun fight on that one.

For a job that took 18 months there was a lot of heartache, not only on GHD's behalf but also by the department to win the trust of the community. I think the way we assessed the projects, both in the benefit-cost-ratio analysis, which is a purely economic analysis, and also in the qualitative assessment using GAM, it showed that in the case of Scottsdale A it ranked the worst out of those four options, both under the benefit cost ratio and under the GAM analysis. Certainly in my time there, we did a lot of advertising, a lot of publicity, a lot of encouragement to the local communities, but we had no significant representations saying to us that Scottsdale A is the only way to go.

The Committee questioned Mr Wadsley as to how many representatives of the transport industry were involved in the process, he responded:-

When we had the transport focus group there were about, I think, 20-odd members invited. I don't know if they all turned up. I think we had about 16 or 17, and that was actually held in Launceston. At the Scottsdale community focus group there were about 23 people, of which probably three or four of those were transport operators. As I said before, Trevor Hookway and Steven Abraham were on the steering committee from the very beginning. Trevor saw it all the way through to the end. He endorsed the report along with others and it was, I must admit, somewhat perplexing that so late after our project was finished people started raising these issues about Scottsdale A and the Tasman Highway as well.

When I saw Glen Moore earlier in the year I asked him specifically why didn't he get involved with the focus group and he said he was too busy at that time and that he couldn't get involved but he was certainly well aware of it and had the opportunity. It was a shame, because he is a good speaker. He made some pretty pertinent comments to us at the time but he obviously couldn't come onto the focus groups or the committee at that stage.

It is probably fair to say too that when DIER set up the steering committee there was actually an open invitation - anybody could put their name forward. From the point of view of a consultant trying to manage the process that made it difficult because we had 34 people on the committee, of which 23 or 25 regularly turned up to meetings. The meetings normally start at about 10.30 in the morning and went through until five o'clock at night, which is a long day, particularly with three hours travelling each way for us from Hobart. It was a big job and at least I suppose I was being paid for it. A lot of those people weren't being paid and they put their heart and soul into it.

At the end of the process, when we went to the draft report stage, we had four public display processes running consecutively in Scottsdale, Lilydale, Launceston and Rocherlea. Every person on the focus group was written to with the executive summary of the report and encouraged to attend the display. At the end of the process we also set up what we called the citizens jury, where anybody who was opposed to the recommendations could come and actually make a submission to the citizens jury, which effectively was the steering committee. We had one representation and that came and that was from the Bridestowe Lavender Farm. They were mainly concerned about signage and access from a potential deviation off the Golconda Road to their property, and that was resolved.

I think there was more than adequate consultation. There was more than adequate opportunity for people to make comment on the recommendations of the study. Some people suggested that Scottsdale A was useful for people trying to get to Bridport but you do not build what is now a fairly expensive highway - and even then our estimates were \$9 million or so - for tourist traffic. Even if Bridport took off and increased by 20 per cent you are not going to have the traffic numbers to justify a road being five kilometres closer to Bridport. Scottsdale is the service centre for the north-east. That is where the substantial traffic is going to come from.

As we make a point about in our report, apart from the heavy freight issues - and we certainly recommended that Bridport main road remain open for B-double freight from Scottsdale to Bell Bay and into Launceston - there was sufficient justification for the Lilydale-Golconda Road to be upgraded on the basis of passenger and commercial traffic alone, and light trucks. It did not need heavy freight to justify an upgrade of that route.

The other advantage to the Lilydale-Golconda route was that it served a number of communities along the route. You have Underwood, Lilydale, Lebrina, Wyena, Golconda and Nabowla, and combined they represent a sizeable population that would benefit from the upgrading of the road. The Tasman Highway really services, in terms of local populations, nowhere near as substantial a population as that.

When questioned by the Committee as to who determined the project objectives, Mr Wadsley responded:-

The objectives and the criteria under each of those objectives were all defined by the steering committee and they were the criteria by which the road assessment panel then assessed each of the projects. It was a long job and it was difficult for those people. We had to really bring them up to speed on the way in which they had to assess those projects. We had lots of forms and they had to score them. They actually had to provide scores against each of those criteria for each of those road projects. We have large spread sheets back on the computers at work where you could see all the numbers that had to go in to end up with one number at the end of the day.

... Each focus group was asked to do two things. It was asked to look strategically at the entire corridor from Rocherlea to Scottsdale.

... We talked about the Sideling. We talked about all the regional linking issues with the Bridport main road, Pipers River Road, Pipers Brook, Ferny Hill Road - all those linkage issues. In some cases the groups were good at that. In some cases it was harder for them to think big; they were more worried about their own particular patch. But we dealt strategically and then we got locally. We asked each focus group to look at their own local issues - for example, bad corners, where the accidents were, what were the problems for kids, school buses and things like that.

The Committee questioned Mr Wadsley as to how the focus groups were formed, he responded:-

... Some people nominated themselves: they rang up and said, 'Can we be on your focus group? Some were nominated by people on the steering committee and some were people we contacted - for example, I think there is someone from the North-Eastern Soldiers Memorial Hospital. We genuinely try to get a representative sample. We don't care what their views are, we just want to try to get a sample. There's no point our having a meeting where everyone agrees with everything I say because that is not the purpose of what we are there for. What we did try to do was not have all the freight industry in with the community group meetings. The freight industry, naturally enough, sometimes have their own issues and important things to be discussed and they don't really want to get those messed up with community issues, so that is why we had a separate freight industry meeting.

Certainly option A did receive some support through the community focus group but the outcome was that they agreed that B, C or a combination of BC - at that stage C was the Listers Lane connection, so effectively B - could be a viable concern if addressed. The concerns there are about the width of the road and those sorts of issues. I suppose the difficult from our point of view is that when you are going through a strategic planning study you don't have the opportunity to go into the detailed design that Pitt and Sherry have done in subsequent stages. So, in trying to provide cost estimates, there is a huge plus or minus factor in anything like that. As an option, D was the one we recommended but there are significant engineering costs in there. We didn't do any of the hydro-geographical work or the geotech or anything like that, so that is really where Pitt and Sherry were able to make their assessment. It was interesting, when we were asked to review the new options from an environmental planning perspective - and Pitt and Sherry did the engineering assessment - we never actually talked.

Closure of Minstone Road

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to whether the closure of Minstone Road had been raised as an issue in the consultation process. Mr Wadsley responded:-

When Scottsdale D came through, there was discussion made in the project about the effects on Minstone Road and the fact that some machinery may have to go through

Scottsdale. But certainly the view that we formed - and council did not see that as being a significant issue - was in terms of comparing that to the greater benefit the road would provide to the region and access. One of the really important things that we were looking for in a road planning sense in this section for the western approaches was to remove those rail crossings. By having a new deviation from Blumont Park right through to Listers Lane, we have effectively taken four railway crossings out of a major passenger and freight route, and in safety terms that is enormously important. If you talk to anybody in ARB or in federal transport circles, you will find that railway crossings are a major traffic hazard, and by taking four out you significantly improve the safety and the travel time, reducing, I suppose, the surprise.

Freight routes

The Committee questioned Mr Wadsley as to what consideration had been given to the issue of freight routes should a pulp mill be situated on the north-west coast rather than at Bell Bay that may result in log truck traffic through the middle of Launceston. Mr Wadsley responded:-

At the eleventh hour of our study they had a problem with Cora Linn Bridge. We looked at Prossers Forest Road - the link there - and the fact that that was built as a forestry road by North Forest Products but because council had approved subdivisions there then the Launceston City Council is getting a lot of complaints about the fact that you have log trucks in effectively what is becoming a residential area. I think that is probably a problem for council. They probably should never have endorsed those subdivisions on a main forestry route there.

We didn't get into the ring-road option. That was not part of our brief. Certainly there was some discussion around it and other issues there but our charge was to look at getting a link from Launceston into the north-east.

My view is that even with Lilydale-Golconda being upgraded and over the entire route the Bridport Main Road link through to Bell Bay and even down the East Tamar Highway to Launceston would still be preferred by most heavy vehicle users - and particularly Bridport Main Road - because the topography is so good. Once they get about six or seven kilometres north of Scottsdale they can get into top gear and literally stay there all the way through to Bell Bay. That is certainly a problem with the Lilydale-Golconda route. We made no bones about the fact that the topography there is difficult with Clover Hill and the climb at Bacala but again there was enough justification on freight and commercial traffic alone to justify that that route should be upgraded, not including heavy freight.

Brid River

The Committee questioned the witnesses regarding the area of the road adjacent to the Brid River and the potential for sinkage. Mr Barrett responded:-

I have discussed this issue with Mr Kettle as well and he showed me the pictures of the excavator getting bogged, which were quite impressive - and I was quite concerned

about that as well; that if we have to build a road across we do not end up with a section where no road can be built. I discussed this with one of the directors of Pitt and Sherry, John Eckersley-Maslin who is a geotechnical engineer and he has actually been up on site, walked along it and did some testing in terms of the sort of strength of the materials underneath and he was not at all concerned. He said this was no different to the Deloraine bypass where they had similar issues with property owners claiming that they had lost tractors and machinery in very soft material near the river at Deloraine. In fact on the Deloraine bypass project during the geotechnical testing they lost an excavator there in similar sorts of material. It had to be pulled out by a substantially larger machine and since then we have built a 10-metre high embankment on top of those materials and it has been no problem at all.

There are issues that we have to be aware in building on those soft sediments but they have certainly been done in quite a number of other areas and they have been very successful so we did not see that there was going to be any significant issue which would prevent putting the road across those soft materials.

Engineering perspective

Mr Barrett made the following submission regarding the comparative engineering tasks presented by the alternative routes:-

Following the actual value management study and the NETAS studies carried out by GH & D, Pitt and Sherry were engaged to look at specific routes. The Scottsdale A group, which has been discussed here, was not one of those routes; we weren't asked to look at that route at all. There were approximately seven routes which we were asked to investigate and we investigated those on a number of issues: geotechnical, hydrological, road user safety, traffic management, road design benefits, road user benefits, road maintenance costs and total project costs. They are the specific issues that we investigated on those seven routes. Before going into that we investigated those separate to what GH & D were doing. We did a concept design for each of the routes and we handed those concept designs to GH & D for them to do their analysis on the environmental planning-type issues and we went off and in parallel did the engineering and costing issues.

Unfortunately, the nomenclature which was used in this study was a little bit different to the nomenclature done in the previous studies. The option which we recommended in our report, based on engineering cost issues - we call it corridor D, which is options 2 and 6. Corridor D is different to Scottsdale D.

(So corridor D basically went through bushland) and came back onto the existing road and followed Hurst Creek and up onto Listers Lane.

Since this analysis there has been a minor modification to the option we recommended after the Bissetts had made some representations on the loop off Golconda up onto Listers Lane. They were concerned about the amount of land being acquired and we basically put it straight down off Listers Lane and onto Golconda Road, across one of

the dams. We removed the large loop, which significantly reduced the amount of land that would be required from the Bissetts' property. The issues that we went through in analysing each of the options: the first was geotechnical assessment - we walked along the routes with a geotechnical engineer, geologist - there were a number of issues which were picked up but there were no issues that we considered would prevent any of the options from being constructed. There were no major geotechnical issues at all. There were some things highlighted in option 2. We were going across the buffer, the clear-felled land there as is on the plan - the old photograph - that is a granite-diorised country. Granite diorite is, in its normal state, extremely hard rock and any cuttings which we would require would be obviously very expensive. We were concerned about that. We have carried out drilling tests in all of the cuttings and we have actually found that all the granite diorite is highly weathered and can easily be excavated so it would not be treated as rock. Our concerns back in the early stages have been resolved by some geotechnical testing to actually eliminate those concerns, and which is apt to reduce the expected costs.

There were no other real significant issues in any of the options. They all had issues of some minor slope stability which we would just have to deal with in detailed design but nothing of any significance. Hydrologically - again there were really no great issues for any of the options. There are a number of stream and creek crossings, and the crossing of the Brid River as well. However most of those would be a single span bridge or a box culvert, nothing that would preclude any of the options from going ahead.

The road users safety assessment: going through all the options again. Corridor options which contained option 1 or 8 we have found contain significant safety issues. Option 1 and 8 are basically the options which travel either down Nations Road or on the opposite side of the Hurst Creek gully concerned with the long steep grades -

... Any options which contain those corridor options we were concerned with the safety issues on those mainly due to the long steep grades, the requirement for climbing lanes and those climbing lanes with curves. There is another issue with say coming up the hills heading in an easterly direction coming up over the crest of the hill in the morning with the sun directly in the eyes, there is a safety issue. Also corridor options containing option 4 or 4.2, could contain grade rail crossings, which again was a major safety issue.

Option 2 and option 6 which was our eventually recommended option, we did not see any significant safety issues there which we could not deal with in the detailed design.

Negotiations with landowners

Ms McIntyre made the following submission in relation to negotiation with landowners affected by the project:-

... From the planning scheme amendment process, the only representations made were from people who would be potentially affected by property acquisition, so that gave us a fairly good indication that we had community acceptance of the project. We had 12

representations, yes, but they were mostly dealing with specific property impact issues, apart from the Bissetts, who raised the Oakdene Road issue. Stage 1, the project that we have come to you with, on the existing road alignment doesn't prejudice what happens past that Oakdene Road area.

Mr Millar added:-

That was the point I was trying to raise, perhaps unsuccessfully, on Tuesday; that what we put before you can stand alone anyway. As Denise says, in no way does that prejudice the alignment further to the south.

... I would suggest that, irrespective of which alignment we choose in the future, there will be an issue just in this Oakdene-Brid River areas, depending on which alignment. You will either ... the Kettles or the Turners making representations that we have got it wrong.

DOCUMENTS TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE

The following documents were taken into evidence and considered by the Committee:

- Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources (DIER);
- Michael Coote, Glaxo Smith Kline;
- Leslie Bissett – submission;
- Dorset Council - submission;
- Margaret Lethborg - submission;
- K. R. Kettle - submission.
- Correspondence dated 13 October 2004 from DIER.
- Copy of the NETAS report.
- Copy of the GHD report into the alternative corridor options in relation to environmental, property, agricultural and land impact issues.
- Copy of the Pitt & Sherry report into the alternative corridor options in relation to traffic engineering, design and cost issues.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The evidence presented by the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources to the Committee in the first instance did not clearly present the argument in support of the choice of the subject route above the three other possibilities, known as options A, B and D. In addition, evidence was presented that the level of consultation had been less than effective. Without further enquiry, the Committee was not prepared to approve the project.

The Committee sought copies of the considerable body of work that was produced by the consultant firms GHD and Pitt & Sherry in relation to the competing corridors from Launceston into the North-East, including the final NETAS Report. This documentary evidence was received and was further supported by oral evidence from the principal officers of these firms.

In light of such evidence, the Committee satisfied itself that the consultation process undertaken in determining community and industry views was extensive and was conducted in an entirely appropriate manner. The Committee heard that environmental, property impact, agricultural and land impact issues were fully canvassed with stakeholders and that ample opportunity was provided for full participation in what was a lengthy and well documented process. The two consultancies recommended the same route entirely independently of one another and the Committee is satisfied that any suggestion that the proposal referred to it for approval was a *fait accompli* cannot be substantiated.

Whilst the Committee was impressed with the submission of Mr Bissett, whose farming operation will suffer disruption in addition to the loss of prime agricultural land which is regrettable, on the balance of all the evidence presented, the Committee is satisfied however that the proposed design option minimises the impact on prime agricultural land and the benefits of the project to the greater community and industry outweigh individual interests.

The Committee is satisfied, on the evidence presented, that the proposal in the reference is the optimum route and accordingly, the Committee recommends the project, in accordance with the plans and specifications submitted, at an estimated total cost of \$4,300,000.

Parliament House
HOBART
26 November 2004

Hon. A. P. Harriss M.L.C.
CHAIRMAN