



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

Ferry Main Road

*Presented to His Excellency the Governor pursuant to the provisions of the
Public Works Committee Act 1914.*

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Legislative Council

Mr Harriss (Chairman)
Mr Hall

House of Assembly

Mr Booth
Mr Brooks
Ms White

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INTRODUCTION

To His Excellency the Honourable Peter Underwood, AC, Governor in and over the State of Tasmania and its Dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY

The Committee has investigated the following proposal: -

Ferry Main Road

and now has the honour to present the Report to Your Excellency in accordance with the Public Works Committee Act 1914.

BACKGROUND

This reference recommended that the Committee approve the upgrade of Ferry Main Road, Kettering, to contemporary standards and to minimise the impacts of traffic queuing at the Bruny Island Ferry Terminal. The proposed works aim also to increase the safety of pedestrians in the area.

The full submission of the Department of Infrastructure, Energy & Resources in support of this reference is published on the website of the Committee at:

<http://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/ctee/Joint/works.htm>

PROJECT COSTS

The cost estimate has been developed using a probability assessment with the Australian Government's Best Practice Cost Estimation. @Risk software has been used to predict the probability of project risks occurring.

A P50 estimate indicates the project has a 50% likelihood of being delivered within the indicated price.

A P90 estimate indicates the project has a 90% likelihood of being delivered within the indicated price.

The project estimates are as follows:-

P50	\$4.863m
P90	\$6.249m

Such figures include the cost of investigations to date.

EVIDENCE

The Committee commenced its inquiry on Friday, 19 April last. The following witnesses appeared, made the Statutory Declaration and were examined by the Committee in public:-

- Adrian Paine, Senior Project Manager, Transport Infrastructure Services Division Department of Infrastructure, Energy & Resources
- Craig Tarbotton, Project Manager, Project Management Planning & Design Division Department of Infrastructure, Energy & Resources
- Picton Hay, Chair, Kettering Community Association Inc.

Overview

Mr Paine provided the following overview of the proposed works:-

The Ferry Main Road project is an upgrade project, principally to address the queuing for the ferry at the end of the street. There have been a number of reports and strategic plans investigating into this area, the most recent one being the Ferry Road-Little Oyster Cove precinct plan. The issues that have been identified have been that the queue traffic interrupts the flow of traffic along Ferry Main Road, and also at peak times it has been known to extend out to the Channel Highway. It therefore interrupts the flow of traffic, creating safety hazards and generally interrupts the business of the street, residents' access and the like.

The project is centred around building a third lane along the northern side of the road, from just past the entrance to the Kettering Hotel down to the ferry terminal marshalling area. On the southern side of the road we are providing pedestrian facilities with a footpath that extends from the Channel Highway all the way down to the ferry terminal. We are providing a new roundabout just past the ferry terminal marshalling area to facilitate traffic turning around, because it is a one-way street. On the Channel Highway side we are building a new footpath that takes it from the intersection with Ferry Main Road across and along the Channel Highway up to the Kettering shopping centre so that there is extensive access there all the way through.

There are a number of residents and businesses along the road who are being consulted with quite extensively by DIER and our design engineers to try to address all their concerns. All those accesses have to be rebuilt because the road alignment changes in places and on the northern side where the new lane is built there are significant changes to the accesses there. There is going to be a need for retaining walls. As much as possible we have tried to reduce the number of accesses so there is more parking area in that queuing lane and less clearway area for the accesses. On the southern side, where most of the residents are, we have been working with residents to try to improve the amenity of the street in the process of upgrading the road. That is essentially the extent of the project.

'Queuing lane'

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to why public funds are proposed to be used to provide a queuing lane for a private business and indeed whether such a lane was effectively a car park. Mr Paine responded:-

The terminal is owned by DIER, which is leased to the ferry owner who owns the ferry and operates it under contract with DIER.

... DIER has a responsibility to maintain access to Bruny Island and that is why the contract for the ferry is with DIER. We oversee that side of it and maintain the road on either side. It is part of our responsibility to maintain that access and also to provide facilities for utilising the ferry and improving access to Bruny Island.

Mr Tarbotton added:-

... This queuing lane is not a parking area for the ferry operator. It might be perceived that way but that would be a misperception of what are trying to achieve. Under the current road alignment, there have been occasions where the traffic queuing up to go to Bruny Island and peak events has backed up to the Channel Highway causing very large disruptions to the local residents. What this project is attempting to do is to alleviate that pressure on the local residents. It is not to provide the ferry operator a parking lane.

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to how driveway accesses would be preserved. Mr Tarbotton responded:-

We have the ferry operator and they are licensed to conduct traffic management. Additionally, on peak events such as public holidays, DIER has, through its maintenance contract and arrangement with an authorised traffic management company to provide excess traffic management. To prevent those accesses being blocked off, that comes under the traffic management. There will be personnel, ferry operators and additional staff provided by this third-party contractor to be sure that does not happen.

Mr Paine added:-

The intention is to reconstruct accesses to the same standard they are now ... We will be reinstating those accesses so that they have got the same level of access as now. We will be improving them to the extent we will provide some bitumen back down those driveways to increase the safety. When they go to leave those accesses they will have proper traction and will not just spin on the gravel at that point and they will be able to join the traffic.

Road demand

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to what, if any, increased demand on the road was anticipated and how often volume was such that it 'spilled' onto the Channel Highway. Mr Tarbotton responded:-

From a number of reports, we know for this area it is projected that 2.7 per cent per annum is the increase in the volume of traffic.

Mr Paine added:-

The spilling out on the Channel Highway has only happened on very rare occasions. The blocking of that current lane is a regular event in terms of those happening virtually every time there are those peak periods at Easter and the like. But the traffic extending out to the Channel Highway I believe has only ever happened two or three times.

... I am not aware of any further studies that have been done or suggested recommendations in terms of dealing with the long-term future. We are just dealing with this project as it stands. There are a couple of issues around that in that. An alternative may be to put another ferry on. Then if you are running more regular services, you are not having such a huge delay. So that would be looked at too at some point when the queuing became unmanageable, I suggest. So, just providing a car park and making people queue longer is not necessarily a long term solution. However, there are no studies I am aware of that have looked at what we might do.

Kettering Community Association Inc.

The Chairman of the Kettering Community Association made the following submission to the Committee:-

The items mentioned (in the written submission), are the embankment, the drainage and also power poles. Probably the most important thing relates to the drainage and embankment. You people were down there this morning. If you walk down there, the result of the works that are planned will be exactly as they are now after a couple of years. Unless the embankments are properly protected and prepared and particularly made less steep, they will just become a wilderness. All the residents are getting very concerned about that.

It has been 50 years since that road was changed. The only change in the last 50 years is that there has been a white line painted down the middle. This is a one-off opportunity to improve that and particularly with the numbers of people who are there now, I think it is essential. It is one of the busiest tourist hubs in Tasmania. If 157 000 cars go over during the year, then they have to come back. That relates to about 400 000 people travelling backwards and forwards. You double those figures to give an idea of the amount of traffic there.

Doing this roadworks now provides a perfect opportunity to do it properly rather than just a single road-minded thing. There should be a proper drainage there. The sewerage problem will go on for years because it will be years before Kettering gets any proper sewage. All the sewerage on the high land comes through, no matter what the system is. Unless there is proper drainage on the southern side of the road, it will remain as it is, no matter what.

The other point about the electricity is that Aurora are not all that happy about trying to go underground with it. But I think that is something that should happen because the roads are being dug up. At least the provision to put the power underground should occur at this stage. The cost of moving the poles themselves would be quite excessive and taking that off the cost of undergrounding it would be a much better proposition. It would do a complete and proper job on that road.

Also on the north side of the road, there is no provision for people alighting out of cars that are parked there. It is a very steep bank. The verge, from what I see on the plan, is too narrow for somebody to safely alight from their motor car without the danger of going down the bank. I think DIER should address that problem and put at least an area where it is safe to alight from your motor car.

There was a lot of question previously concerning the parking. Mr Booth, I think it should work the way it is. The actual queuing of cars on that side is quite constant. It does not always go to the highway but it is constantly blocked on the left-hand side, halfway up or more. Of a morning, afternoon, or any time it can be blocked well up, which means resident or anybody or anybody else who wanted to go down has to drive on the wrong side of the road. As far as having a parking lane, for most

streets that you are in, you can park a car. At the moment, you cannot park your car safely on the sides of the road. That third lane will have great benefit to everybody, particularly to the ferry queues and residents will now have two-way traffic. The community is quite happy about the way the road is being done, but we want it to be a finished job and not a job where the road signs aren't finished and it remains the way it is now.

Footpath

The Committee questioned Mr Hay as to whether the proposed construction of a footpath on the southern or high side of the road was preferable to a boardwalk on the northern side, he responded:-

... I have quite a strong view. There should be a footpath on the road. The optimistic view would be to have a boardwalk as well. There are some there that would prefer the boardwalk but the vast majority want a footpath on the road, along that side of the road... (on the high side) ... because that is where most of the driveways are. That is where most people come out. They do not want to have to cross the road to get to a footpath on the northern side; they want it to be on the southern side.

Traffic volumes

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to where the subject road was placed in the road hierarchy. Mr Paine responded:-

This is a relatively minor rural road in our category. It has quite high traffic volumes but only during those peak periods.

There is (a traffic volume criterion) and it varies. It's not just in terms of the traffic numbers; it depends on the freight load of the vehicles, et cetera. We have a hierarchy of categories of roads up to the main freight routes such as the Midland Highway. This one would be basically at the lower end of that. It's a fairly small, minor road. There would be other similar roads that would carry less volumes that we still maintain. What we are addressing in this project is not influenced by the traffic volumes so much as it is with the other issues we want to address here, such as queuing traffic congestion and pedestrians and the like. In considering how we deal with this road, there hasn't been any particular criterion built into this project - that is, in relation to its category.

The Committee cited Mr Hay's evidence that 157,000 vehicles used the road annually and questioned the witnesses as to whether any modelling had been undertaken to assess future demand. Mr Tarbotton responded:-

The studies show and not just by this design consultant but they are basing their information on previous studies that indicate that between one to two per cent per annum over the last ten years; over the last ten years the traffic volume has increased between those two percentages. Based on that, it is going to continue to increase...

... I do not think this improvement is going to increase the flow. It might have a spin-off effect if it becomes easier. I know queuing for three hours does deter certain people so if people hear that the queuing is no longer an issue, if that restriction is no longer there, then perhaps yes other people will travel to Bruny Island. But just the inclusion of a queuing lane is not going to drastically increase the flow.

Mr Paine added:-

As a general rule, you would expect there to be some development. You know traffic volumes increase because there is somewhere for someone to go if it is a new attraction, or if there is an extensive residential development but there is nothing that has been indicated to us that is about to happen on Bruny Island to increase people's attraction.

Drain

The Committee cited Mr Hay's evidence in respect of the proposed drain and questioned the witnesses as to whether residents' preferred gutter design would be more appropriate. Mr Paine responded:-

... once we build the footpath, that drain becomes council's responsibility. So we have been consulting with council as to what they would like there and what is achievable. We have also been consulting with the individual landowners to make sure we create a frontage that is acceptable for them, too. With both those criteria, that's what we have tried to address, so there are different solutions at each point along the road.

Mr Tarbotton added:-

I believe the consultation process has been effective. Most of what Mr Hay said is valid. A formalised concrete drain may well be better. It's not about DIER saying, 'It's too difficult' - we don't do that - but we have budget constraints, which aren't set by ourselves, and we have to work within those parameters. An open spoon drain or an open table drain is far more cost-effective and far cheaper to build than a formalised spoon drain, most certainly. Any formalised concrete-lined drain has to be covered; they become a hazard because they are a trip or fall event, whereas this is not.

...The design - that slope is 1.5:1 - 1.5 horizontal to 1 vertical - is a design slope gradient so these batters will not slump or fail - so they won't move down. There is a risk management here, so we determine what the likelihood is of this failure, if it is going to occur in a reasonable amount of time or an extended period of time, we consider that acceptable. These slopes won't fail weekly or monthly; they may fail every 10 years, depending on the storm event, but we have to accept that and design within those risk parameters.

The overgrowth, which is what Mr Hay referred to - and we all saw that when we walked down there - is a maintenance issue; it is not a design issue. If we design this in a perfect world, we assume council will maintain their property as a council property. We can't avoid that. We can put signs up, 'Please maintain', but that is a separate issue. Do I believe it will occur? It probably will, but how DIER can prevent that, I can't provide an answer. We have contracts in place; council has its obligations, funding and tasks.

Roundabout

The Committee questioned the witnesses about status of the roundabout located at the eastern end of the works, Mr Paine explained:-

It is a true roundabout. It will look like a roundabout and the centre will be formed as well but it will not have shrubbery in it or will not have a steep curve. There will

be a gradual entrance such that large traffic could go over that centre section without causing any damage to all the vehicles that traverse it. It will be roundabout with a virtually flat centre but it will be slightly raised from the normal paved area.

The Committee then sought an explanation as to why a roundabout was necessary. The following exchange ensued:-

Mr TARBOTTON - *Roundabouts are also a traffic flow or a traffic management device. What we anticipate is that this is a multidirectional road. We have local residents' traffic who might want to turn back to get back on the Channel Highway. We have traffic exiting from a ferry. Having a roundabout as opposed to a simple T-intersection or a 45 degree intersection is that this is self-managing of traffic. For local residents or small vehicles wanting to turn and go back to the Channel Highway, once you have entered into that roundabout, the normal traffic prevail. It allows heavy vehicles to exit these back on to the Ferry Main Road as well as allowing local residents who wish to turn about easily, to do so. At the moment there is no turning circle for local residents who wish to around. They have travel to the end of Ferry Main Road or utilise some of the boat ramp.*

Mr PAINE - *By forming it into a proper roundabout, you better control the traffic and reduce the possibility of accidents of the light traffic trying to cut across the middle while somebody else is cutting across the other way. They enter a roundabout as they would in a normal roundabout and other traffic will enter it in the same way.*

Mr TARBOTTON - *That is not a large expanse of flat surface. The centre dark hatching is slightly raised, perhaps 100 millimetres above the concrete. But is mountable, so it has a mountable kerb - one of those inclined edges. It is not an issue to mount that by either truck or vehicle but it does still formalise that outer ring into a lane. It still restricts and controls the flow of the traffic where they can travel. You cannot, as a vehicle, cross over that centre. There will also be some signs in there directing traffic, so you cannot cut straight across it. It is not just a large open public square.*

Mr PAINE - *That square entrance will be directing traffic. The buses will use that roundabout as well because the buses come down here to drop pedestrian traffic onto the ferry. There is also a school bus that comes down and turns around, so they will be using that roundabout as well.*

DOCUMENTS TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE

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

- Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources – Ferry Main Road Upgrade, Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, December 2012; and
- Picton Hay, Chair, Kettering Community Association Inc., Submission dated 25 March 2013.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The need for the works was established. Once completed the works will provide: unobstructed access to adjacent properties; improved connectivity to the ferry terminal; provision for road side parking; provision of new footpaths for pedestrians; and improved safety for turning vehicles at the ferry terminal.

The Committee recommends the project, in accordance with the documentation submitted.

**Parliament House
Hobart
14 May 2013**

**Hon. A. P. Harriss M.L.C.
Chairman**