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THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON FRIDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2012.

ROKEBY MAIN ROAD

Mr ADRIAN PAINE, SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER, RESOURCES AND **Ms SARAH BOYLE**, MANAGER, PLANNING AND DESIGN, DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE, ENERGY AND RESOURCES, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Harris) - Welcome to the committee. As in the past, we will have questions. We try to let you unfold your evidence, but if there is a need for clarification along the way we will take questions. We try not to interfere with your submission to the committee too much.

Ms BOYLE - The background to this project is that there has been an ongoing upgrading of Rokeby Main Road from Oceana Drive heading south.

Mr BOOTH - Buckingham Drive?

Mr PAINE - The overall planning has been looking at the continuation from Oceana Drive through to Diosma Street. This particular project is for Buckingham Drive through Diosma Street.

Mr BOOTH - Okay. Sorry, Sarah.

Ms BOYLE - The Community Roads Package announced at the last election allocated \$10 million for continuity of the works from Oceana Drive south. It became clear very early on that the funding would not cover the project all the way through, so we scoped up the project that had the highest priority in terms of the traffic that would be generated by the approved subdivisions in this area. There are three or four, and about 600 lots have been approved, so we are expecting substantial growth in the future. It was envisaged that this project would support those subdivision movements, and particularly those vehicles coming out of Pass Road from Glebe Hill Estate.

As we scoped up this work it became evident also that \$10 million was not going to be sufficient, and that it was going to be closer to a \$14.4 million project. Initially Clarence Council had indicated that they would fund the extension of Tollard Drive so that we'd design in a length and hook up the existing Tollard Drive with the Pass Road intersection and have all that incorporated in the traffic signals at that intersection.

However, Council have decided, in recent months, to withdraw that funding and so we will proceed with the stub of the road to hook in with the existing road to enable access from the fire service. So the fire station will be able to have access onto the new highway through that stub and we'll proceed with the design for Tollard Drive. That will

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be available should a situation arise where the Council can in fact fund that extension while the contractors are on site.

It's a duplication so it is going to be four lanes - two lanes in each direction - and it will be separated by a wire rope fence. That's part of improving the safety of the area and it will also be a feature of the next section back to Oceana Drive as well; so it will be a divided four lanes of highway.

There are a number of major services that are on-site and the work has been done to avoid those services, although there is some relocation of Aurora power poles. So we're minimising impact on services as much as possible.

As we heard this morning, the road is going to be lifted in that area in order to improve the curve. To set up the situation at Tollard Drive, there is a flatter route. The whole of Pass Road and Rokeby Main Road will be lifted so it will be a bit higher than the current level and there'll be significant fill in order to achieve that.

Mr PAINE - In terms of approvals, the council has given us their planning approval. We have all the relevant reports done for flora, fauna, Aboriginal Heritage and Historic Heritage. The only things that have fallen out of that are some flora, which is the *A popinensis*, and a couple of other smaller species, but particularly the *A popinensis* is one that we are dealing with with the federal government to provide an offset to.

Also while we're dealing with this matter with the federal government, we've included the potential impact on *E. ovata* which is part of stage two so it is not part of this section of road from Buckingham Drive to Diosma but there will be an impact on *E. ovata* between Oceana Drive and Buckingham Drive, which is the proposed stage two works, so we've identified that and we're dealing with that with EPBCA at the same time.

Mr BOOTH - Do you have to wait until you have the approval before you start the project, in that sense?

Mr PAINE - Yes. Those submissions are being made to the federal government at the moment. We're working through the required offsets which we believe we've now secured and we're updating the federal government on the process.

Ms BOYLE - Further to that, although we've nominated a tender date in January, we won't be tendering a project until we have the full EPBCA federal government approvals.

Mr BOOTH - I want to get it on the record again - and as you know I've asked you this a few times - with regard to the prioritisation of road projects around the state and out on the site you confirmed this was an election promise - a community roads program, I think you said, that was part of the election promise?

Ms BOYLE - Yes.

Mr BOOTH - Is there any other way that you identify priorities within DIER for all the works that you undertake, whether it be a new road construction, junction upgrades or whatever, that has a priority list that's based on priority rather than a politician making a promise? Or is your general direction just by political promises?

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Ms BOYLE - DIER has a range of strategic documents. I know in the asset management area we have something called the strategic asset management plan which looks at the road asset around the state. We also have the bridge asset management plan. They are currently being revised and updated. They form the basis of understanding the condition of the existing asset rather than looking at new capital works. That work informs the program for pavement strengthening or rehabilitation or bridge strengthening or bridge replacement around the state. In terms of new capital investment projects, there is a range of strategic work that is being undertaken and put into place. The nation-building 2 submission that the department has recently put into the Australian government has had a lot of strategic underpinning work done to prioritise the projects that we put up to the Australian government. For the Tasmanian government projects, the same strategy for national level is applied to the state network. We have a categorisation or prioritisation of roads in terms of freight, and projects generally fall out of the higher category roads according to freight and lower category roads are generally supported in terms of the bridge and the road pavements.

Mr BOOTH - Is there a hierarchy of needs that you work out and you select the ones that has have some sort of higher priority? If it was not driven by election promises then what would drive it? How would you wake up in the morning and decide what you were going to do?

Ms BOYLE - The freight routes predominantly drive the project prioritisation. Currently, along those freight routes the bridges are the ones that the department has considered the weak links.

Mr BOOTH - Because they simply cannot carry the loads, or they are dangerous, or what?

Ms BOYLE - They are coming of age. A lot of the bridge asset is more than halfway through its life or coming towards the end of its life. They were built at time when we did not have the axle combinations or the loads. There is a direction within the agency to focus on understanding the bridge asset on our primary freight routes.

Mr BOOTH - What about safety? There is black spot funding, for example. There are junctions that are sight-deficient or roads that are too marrow, sight distances on corners - there are a whole lot of reasons why you might decide to upgrade a road. So that you can understand where I am coming from, I am becoming increasingly alarmed that it seems that every project we have before us, notwithstanding the fact that it might or might not be a good project, seems to be driven without some coherent overall state strategy to identify areas of greatest need and greatest safety - particularly greater safety. The project that we are looking at today seems sensible; the site inspection looks like it would be a good idea, but I am wondering whether the money spent there - \$10 million - would not be better spent; that might be a political consideration in terms of priority.

If you recall the north-east forest roads inquiry, I asked you if you had that money to spend somewhere else whether this would be your highest priority, and you said that it would not be. How do you determine then the priority? Is it just driven by promises?

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Ms BOYLE - As an agency, a public service - and our head of agency is the minister - we have a commitment to deliver any election promises. That is there and that is something that has happened as long as the government agencies have existed.

Mr BOOTH - I am not saying that abnormal; I understand that.

Ms BOYLE - Certainly, the direction that we are tending towards is being able to provide a departmental-preferred priority list to the minister. At the end of the day, at election time, the minister has the choice of which projects he wants to put up as election commitments. As an agency, we can only provide our technical expertise and recommendations based on technical expertise.

Mr BOOTH - I suppose that's right. You have a departmental preferred list of priorities, then. Where would this project come on that?

Ms BOYLE - This is part of a long-term strategy, since the whole duplication from Mornington interchange and moving through to Oceana Drive. This has been part of a 20-year, or probably longer, construction program when the Mornington interchange was built. This has been a long-term strategy that the department has had in recognition of the growth that is occurring in this area - Droughty Point in the south. It an ongoing delivery of a longer term strategy to provide duplication through to the Police Academy.

Mr BOOTH - Where would this project sit in terms of the departmental priority list? Are there other projects higher on the departmental preferred priority projects list than this one or is this the one on the top?

Ms BOYLE - This road has a different function to other parts of the highway. In terms of prioritisation, we need to be aware that this has a commuter function. It is safety, commuter efficiency as opposed to a freight route on the national highway, which has a predominant freight function and any works we do there picks up safety aspects. Then you have a black spots program, which is targeted, known, but smaller projects. They tend to be smaller projects for black spots.

There is the ranking and recognition that there is different use for different routes and the different transport requirements within those different categories of routes will have different priorities.

Mr BOOTH - This would fall into a category of community roads rather than just freight roads and within those community roads, priority list, would this one be the highest one?

Ms BOYLE - In terms of an urban road project off the national network, in a more rural, urban environment, it is a missing link for us basically and it is part of fulfilling a long-term strategy and moving south.

Mr BOOTH - Where is it on the priority list?

Ms BOYLE - I don't know that.

Mr BROOKS - How long is the actual stretch of road that is being upgraded?

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Mr PAINE - It's a bit over a kilometre and then there is another 500 or 600 metres off Pass Road.

Mr BOOTH - A goat track is cheaper if that is what you are driving at.

Mr BROOKS - I see there is no artwork, which is great because it's not a building, but we have had that debate in this committee. There is \$700 000 allocated for landscaping which is \$700 a metre to landscape.

Mr PAINE - A lot of that would be in regard to the substantial fills that would need grass treatment.

Mr BROOKS - Wouldn't that be in bulk earthworks?

Mr PAINE - No. Bulk earthworks is putting the soil in place and building the road up. The landscaping comes along afterwards where you need to treat that.

Mr BROOKS - Is that filling or is that just putting some seed on top?

Mr PAINE - I suspect that is really just about seeding it and providing grass.

Mr BROOKS - \$700 000 to seed a 1-kilometre strip?

Ms BOYLE - There has likely been some tree planting because at the moment we are waiting for the federal government to give us guidance on what our requirements are in terms of replacing the populations of the grasslands or for stage 2, the *eucalyptus ovata*. We put several options to the Australian government and one of them is replanting. So there will be some specific replanting of the threatened species as well.

Mr PAINE - There is also the redundant pavement which will be removed and then that needs earth put back there and treated.

Mr BROOKS - Would that mean that is within the landscaping budget or is it in the pavement budget of \$3.1 million?

Mr PAINE - No, pavement just covers the new asphalt that is being put down.

Mr BROOKS - The pavement is not the walking -

Ms BOYLE - No, pavement is generally the gravel that goes underneath the road.

Mr BROOKS - Okay. What are you doing with the cycleway? There is nothing that is being done for that now?

Mr PAINE - We are providing that link on the western side near the existing shared cycleway to bring it up to a bus stop that is just next to the intersection and also bring it up to the intersection so people can go either across and continue on towards Rokeby or they can head north up Pass Road. There will be a cycleway up the western side of Pass Road and then, as you can see, there is a link back down onto the cycleway on the eastern side of the intersection there.

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Mr BROOKS - No doubt we would probably want to talk about that specifically as there is representation made by Bicycle Tasmania and there would be an entrée of questions around that issue. One of the representations in here also suggested that the noise barriers were no longer required or being put in there.

Mr PAINE - That's correct. We had allowed for noise barriers down on both the western and the eastern side of Rokeby Main Road down near housing. We have consulted the property owners there and they are all opposed to noise barriers for a couple of reasons and one is obviously they are not particularly attractive. Two, is they are subject to vandalism which makes them less attractive and, three, they believe it creates a privacy screen so they believe there is a security risk because you don't have that visibility of traffic passing by to keep an eye on potential vandalism on their properties. We have agreed to remove those sound walls and we will be consulting with those landowners over double glazing or other treatment to ensure that the noise -

Mr BROOKS - That will be at the taxpayers' cost, I presume.

Mr PAINE - That's right.

Mr BROOKS - Would that be comparable to sound barriers or would it be cheaper?

Mr PAINE - We haven't completed the investigations into what is actually required on those properties because obviously we need to go to each property and look at what the windows are, do the modelling and work out which ones we need to treat and all the rest of that. The indications at this stage are that it is likely to be more expensive than the sound barriers but we are not talking millions of dollars here.

Mr BROOKS - It could potentially fit within your P50 contingency.

Mr PAINE - We believe at the moment it will fit within our contingencies.

Mr BROOKS - Back on to the \$710 000 for landscaping of a kilometre stretch of road, it certainly seems excessive to me. I am not a landscaper but I find it expensive given the current budgetary tightness and also the need to be prudent with our spending. We want it to look completed but most of these projects aren't overwhelmed with trees, bushes, water features, slides, frog ponds and all that sort of stuff, it is mainly a bit of lawn or chips.

Mr BOOTH - Would you like a frog pond in there?

Mr BROOKS - I just think it is excessive and I would like to know what DIER's position is on why it is going to cost \$700 000 and what is the taxpayer going to get for that.

Ms BOYLE - I think we will have to take that question on notice and go into all the elements that go into that landscaping cost and have a closer look at what has gone into it but, essentially, the elements have the ripping up and the rehabilitation on the old section of road so the rehabilitation is, as Adrian said, putting soil on and planting that out or grassing it out. We have the grassing out of all the batters from the big fill and whether we need to do the replanting for the threatened species as well. If there are any other

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elements we can take that on notice and see what else has been incorporated into that cost.

Mr BROOKS - Do you normally use seed or do you use instant?

Ms BOYLE - It is normally a spray, what we call a hydro-mulching seed, so it is a spray that is put down that has a mulch mashed up with the seed mix, and the seed mix is usually designed for the local area, so for a dryer area like Rokeby -

Mr BROOKS - You do not import a great truckload of instant lawn and put it down?

Ms BOYLE - And roll it out - not on a site like this. It would just be a truck going past and spraying -

Mr BROOKS - You presume it would be a lot more expensive if you did that.

Ms BOYLE - Yes.

Mr BROOKS - Okay, so it is just a truck spraying.

Ms BOYLE - There would be erosion management and stuff like that. They are quite long flat batters.

Mr BROOKS - Would the lawn fix that eventually, so you only have to put a temporary erosion measure in?

Ms BOYLE - The mulch, when it is sprayed out, has a mix of seeds. It has a very fast growing but sterile seed in it and then a longer slow growing seed, so the fast growing rye seed grows very quickly to help stabilise the surface first. There may be other measures because sometimes on long batters they put drainage booms to stop the water running down and getting speed and eroding it away. We can take that on notice.

Mr BROOKS - If you can get that information to the committee it would be great. I consider it an exorbitant amount, given the requirement to be prudent with the taxpayers' money and given the amount of space that we are working with. It seems like a lot of money that could be used for other things.

Mr BOOTH - They are guesstimates at this stage aren't they? You would have some sort of a template that you use for that sort of stuff, or is it specifically estimated on the -

Ms BOYLE - At this level - this is what we call a scoping phase cost estimate or business case cost estimate - it will be based on equivalent projects in the area. Historic rates per square metre in projects lasting for three years, in similar areas.

Mr BOOTH - There is a large area of landscape on that project, is there not, with the width of the batters?

Mr PAINE - Yes.

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Ms BOYLE - Yes. Generally our rates are based on historic figures at this level but there may have been some specific items included in there.

Mr BOOTH - Are you finished, Adam, as I would be interested in moving onto the bicycle stuff then.

Mr BROOKS - Yes. We can move onto that, if it is okay with the chair.

Mr BOOTH - On the site, we had a discussion as walked along that shared pathway. Could you detail to the committee what provisions you have made for bicycles in this project?

Ms BOYLE - I might hand over to Adrian because has is much more up to date with cycling.

Mr PAINE - As I outlined before, we are utilising the existing shared pathway and linking it into the new intersection. The details of the connection on the eastern side may change because this was done as a preliminary indication following the council's decision not to proceed with the full Tollard Drive link. We will be reviewing that as to whether there is a more direct or better way to bring the intersection road back onto the existing shared pathway. It links back into the shared pathway which, as you saw when you visited the site today, drops off into the top end of Grange Road West which is used as the extension further down to Diosma Street. There is also provision made on the road for a two-metre wide shoulder for cyclists. Those who want to use the road have room to use the road.

Mr BOOTH - That two-metre wide shoulder - is that is a lined off tarmac area? What is the standard of the tarmac surface? Is it identical to that on the road?

Mr PAINE - Yes. It will be the same surface as it is on the road itself.

Mr BOOTH - Is there a maintenance program there, where it is swept?

Mr PAINE - I have not looked at the maintenance issues, specifically. I would imagine that it would be treated the same as other DIER roads. I do not know what the general practice is.

Mr BOOTH - You do not know what the general practice is on any of the roads, do you mean?

Mr PAINE - Correct, I do not work the maintenance area and I have not been specifically involved in what they do as a general practice.

Mr BOOTH - Can you get back to the committee then with the maintenance schedule for pathways that are provided in this form? How the verge is maintained and kept clean of debris and broken glass and loose rock?

Mr PAINE - Yes.

Mr BOOTH - Bicycle Tasmania, in its submission, talks about a shared pathway where Rokeby Road corners into Grange Road West. They have been told that full active transport provision is not within the scope of this project. Would that be a completely

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separate path? That would be a separate walking path, I presume, rather than the shoulder provision?

Mr PAINE - Yes, the shared pathway is a separate path at the moment. It is three metres wide and they are the responsibility of council. We have discussed with council what provision we should make there and coordinated with council on what's there at the moment. It would be council's commitment of funding to extend the shared cycleway that is outside our road reserve, to provide those facilities.

Mr BOOTH - Also the walkway, because it is different, isn't it? What you are saying, I think, and I don't want to verbal you, is that you have provided, right along the road on the new works, a three metre wide, separately lined-off area for bicycles.

Mr PAINE - A two metre wide shoulder on the roadway itself, yes.

Mr BOOTH - Two metre of tarmac?

Mr PAINE - Yes.

Mr BOOTH - But that will effectively be parallel to the current shared cycle or walkway?

Mr PAINE - That's right.

Mr BOOTH - Does DIER ever provide, given that is a council responsibility, a walkway on the side - like a footpath - on a road project like this?

Mr PAINE - Yes. There was a similar facility put in at Oceana Drive previously, beside the road.

Mr BOOTH - A walkway and a footpath.

Mr PAINE - A shared footpath/walkway facility that has a barrier between the road and the pathway. It is a process of negotiating that with council. That becomes council's responsibility. They need to maintain that, if it is outside the roadway.

Mr BOOTH - This project could have a fenced walkway/footpath on the outside of that verge? If you wanted to you could include it, funds being available, but it is not part of the design at the moment.

Ms BOYLE - Generally, under the Roads and Jetties Act, the department is not required to provide footpaths. If we do so, it is by negotiation or in special circumstances. But generally, as an agency, we are not responsible for the footpaths - that is a council responsibility. It is through negotiation, an agreement around long-term maintenance and ownership that DIER include footpaths in construction.

Mr BOOTH - Where there are footpaths, for example, on the side of the Brooker Highway, that would be council responsibility. Even though DIER might construct them as part of a project, the councils take over maintenance?

Ms BOYLE - Yes.

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Mr BROOKS - The existing one that we walked on - that will be removed?

Mr PAINE - No, that will remain.

Mr BOOTH - Will that be repaired, or is that simply not part of your project?

Mr PAINE - It's not part of our project, so it's a council responsibility.

Mr BOOTH - It's not part of your responsibility?

Mr PAINE - It's council responsibility..

Mr BROOKS - You will provide a cycleway on the side of the road?

Mr PAINE - Yes, there will be two cycle paths. The existing one - the council one - and we are also providing -

Mr BROOKS - The existing footpath will remain as well,

Mr PAINE - Yes.

Mr BROOKS - But it's not your problem.

Mr PAINE - It's not our responsibility.

Mr BROOKS - I did not mean anything derogatory. It is not your responsibility, therefore it's very hard to make it part of the project, given that you are providing a cycleway anyway.

Mr BOOTH - Will the cycleway be on both sides of the road?

Mr PAINE - Yes. They have different purposes. There is the shared pathway away from the road which is protected and more suited to family cyclists, whereas the professional ones tend to want to be on the road, where they can go faster.

Mr BROOKS - Like Mr Booth. You can see him in his lycra.

Mr BOOTH - You might dream about that, but that's as far as it will get.

Mr BROOKS - I think Mr Hall is the keen cyclist amongst us.

CHAIR - You two might choose to focus.

Mr BROOKS - Will that be marked as a cycle way?

Mr PAINE - It will have an edge line. At this stage I don't believe there is any specific marking as a cycleway. It is just at the edge by the road.

Mr BROOKS - Sometimes they spray a picture of a bike on those lanes.

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Mr PAINE - That may be the case but I haven't got into that detail yet as to how it will be identified.

Mr BOOTH - Is there an adequate verge beyond the edge of the cycleway that is a dirt verge or a gravel verge for cars to pull off, for example? What is the protocol in terms of priority? Can a car pull off into what you have described here as the bicycle lane and park there, effectively blocking it? What are the protocols there?

Ms BOYLE - Cars are able to pull off into that space and geometrically we will have the 2-metre sealed shoulder and that will be separated by an edge lane from the traffic lane and then we will have an unsealed verge of about half a metre - and I am guessing that is what it is here. It is a standard half-metre unsealed verge and in a more rural road like this the cars are able to pull off and park in an emergency if they need to.

Mr BOOTH - There is not actually adequate width there for a car if it was an emergency or if they want to use a phone or something like that to be clear of the cycleway then?

Ms BOYLE - No, there wouldn't be.

Mr BOOTH - From a safety perspective, if in fact this is a cycleway and if that is what it is provided for, ought you not design it with a wide enough verge for a vehicle to get off the cycleway, in other words, because otherwise cyclists are effectively sharing it with a parking area, which means that they would be forced back out onto the road to pass?

Ms BOYLE - Ordinarily in an environment like this, we provide a 1.2 metre sealed shoulder, so we are providing a wider sealed shoulder to accommodate cyclists. But it is a sealed shoulder, it is just wider to accommodate cyclists. It hasn't been designed as a specific separate cycleway that will always be free of parked vehicles. It is designed as a wider sealed shoulder to accommodate cyclists.

Mr BOOTH - Do you think from a safety point of view it would be a reasonable proposition if it is a cycleway, and I know you are saying it is not specifically designed as such, but if it were a specifically designed cycleway that it ought to be free of potential obstruction?

Ms BOYLE - If it were a specific cycle lane, Australian guides certainly recommend that it is kept free of obstruction but there are numerous examples around the place where it is not practicable for it to happen. Parking does or can occur in delineated or line-marked cycle space.

Mr BOOTH - If we are going to accept that we build cycleways, then it seems that it is inappropriate to design it so it will be obstructed by a vehicle pulling off and, even though the vehicles will have to cross that cycleway to get to an area they can park, it seems that there needs to be a wider gravel verge where cars or any vehicle can pull off and park and use phones or have a flat tyre fixed or whatever it is; otherwise they would be obstructing the cycleway and you wouldn't have a highway where a vehicle if it had a flat tyre had nowhere to pull off, would you? It would be pretty dangerous if you did - just stop anywhere and obstruct the road.

Ms BOYLE - At the moment there is a space for a vehicle to get off the road.

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Mr BOOTH - But only onto shared -

Ms BOYLE - Yes, on to the sealed shoulder. What we are providing is a sealed shoulder that is wider than average to accommodate cyclists.

Mr BOOTH - Have you a rough costing of what it would cost to make a shoulder, an unsealed shoulder, if you like, wide enough for a car to pull right off the currently shared sealed shoulder?

Ms BOYLE - We would have to take that one on notice, particularly on this project because we have such a big fill, so it would be widening the fill. In order to provide a 2-metre wide safe cycle space plus another 2 metres for a parked car, we'd be widening a 5-metre high fill by 2 metres.

Mr BOOTH - It would only be about 1.5 for a metre, wouldn't it? Because you already have some gravel.

Ms BOYLE - Yes, but to get the width of a car, which is about a 2 metre width, you'd effectively put a 1.5 metre to 2 metre width. So it would be significant earthwork and a significant cost on this project to provide that but we'd have to take on notice what the numeric cost would be.

Mr BOOTH - Would it be difficult for you to do that - to calculate that additional cost?

Ms BOYLE - It would mean running further design work and designing it up and then getting the quantities to do it, so it would be significant additional work.

Mr BOOTH - We might talk about that later, Chair, after we've talked to the adviser from the Bicycle Tasmania.

CHAIR - I am concerned, as Sarah has already indicated, that it will clearly vary, depending on the project - she has indicated, this has a lot of fill and so on. So whether we need it for this specific project - and I also take into consideration that Sarah and Adrian have indicated that there's 1.5 metres of gravel.

Ms BOYLE - No, there's half a metre. That is our standard unsealed verge width.

CHAIR - When you add that to the 2 metres of seal, you have more than 2 metres for vehicles to get almost off the seal.

Mr BOOTH - That is why I was suggesting that, rather than seeking it now, we would talk about it as a committee after we've heard further evidence rather than subjecting you to the cost or agreeing to do that extra work before the committee had time to discuss it.

Mr BROOKS - Chair, DIER wouldn't have seen this submission, I presume, from Bicycle Tasmania?

Ms BOYLE - No.

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Mr BROOKS - We have a submission from Bicycle Tasmania. Is it public?

CHAIR - It is now, we've accepted it.

Mr BROOKS - In it they highlight - and they acknowledge that they met with -

Mr PAINE - Well, they've met with me a couple of times.

Laughter.

Mr BROOKS - They have just said 'DIER' and they have said that you would look at provision of a fully shared pathway at Rokeby Road, Grange Road West. What we would like to know is did you agree to look at it and have you looked at it?

Mr PAINE - The most recent meeting was only a few days ago and it involved a representative from Minister McKim's office, amongst others, and we agreed that whilst we don't currently have a budget to provide such a pathway, the section that is of particular concern and interest to Bicycle Tasmania is back down closer to the houses between Grange Road West and the new road where we did have sound walls and now we don't. So the question that is being raised is: is there room for a path through there now that the sound walls are no longer being installed? We have agreed to go back and have another look at the room and the space that may be available there, given the contour - it is quite a steep bank on the edge there that falls off Range Road West into Rokeby and the new alignment, and see if there's room there.

That could allow for a path to go in in the future. So we've agreed to look at that, then we're going to report back upon whether we believe there is room there or, if there isn't, we can have further discussions about what may be done to accommodate it.

Mr BROOKS - I certainly understand our discussion around the road that has additional space in place for cyclists - it's not a cycleway but it's there for them - but obviously we wouldn't want families and kids with training wheels out there on the road. We'd like them to stick to the path or a shared pathway.

My opinion, and to put it on the record, is that I think we do need to look and promote that where possible. One of the things that this committee has always advocated for is making sure we take into account the long-term needs of the area. If the project can't afford to do it, does it make the opportunity available for it to be done in the future? An example of that was the Devonport Police Station where it was initially rejected because it didn't allow for future needs. On a redress of the design, it was subsequently approved by this committee. I think the thing that they are raising appears to have merit, even though they haven't given evidence yet. What is DIER's position on that?

Ms BOYLE - Are you talking about this project specifically?

Mr BROOKS - Taking into account that you haven't seen it, what they have said is that, 'The project represents an opportunity to put in place the building blocks for a shared pathway effectively from the Tasman Bridge all the way along the eastern shore. DIER could create plans for such work later if it doesn't have funds for ... components. Ignoring such an opportunity and then attempting to retro-fix subsequent components does not

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represent best practice and is not in the interests of local residents. DIER's current plans provide for a shared pathway which is then routed onto existing and very poor quality pathways at the Rokeby Fire Station, routing cyclists along a poor quality footpath. It also has poor sight-lines in terms of driveways which is undesirable, especially when alternatives appear not to have been explored'. That is in the submission that this committee has received.

To paraphrase, I think most people would agree, if there is an opportunity to do that then we should at least look at it. Is there an opportunity to look at that and, if not completing it, then to at least planning it and making sure there is adequate space into the future?

Mr PAINE - We have given a commitment that we will look at the opportunity to plan for it, so that is what we will be investigating. We haven't started that work yet. As I say, the most recent meeting was only a few days ago.

Mr BROOKS - I understand that.

Mr PAINE - The initial approach to the shared driveway was obviously guided by consultation at the time, which included council, who have obviously constructed the existing path and accepted that whilst it is not the best outcome to be bringing people down Grange Road West, it is a low-volume traffic road. It is virtually a dead end up the street there and so they haven't raised that as being a priority for their cycle path strategy. So it wasn't raised as a priority to address as part of this project initially. But I agree that we should look at some options and see if we can plan for future conditions.

Mr BOOTH - Could that come back as an amended project scope then, potentially, if you are looking at it? Are you looking at including this project?

Mr PAINE - We are not looking at including the work in this project, only to see if we can accommodate it if the planning can be in place so that it could be done at a later stage. Maybe there are things that we are doing now which we could do a little bit differently to make sure that there will be room for it rather than building it without any thought.

Mr BOOTH - Potentially then, if you don't include the works, you would include sufficient area for design. So it might mean the plan might be amended to move the road a bit or something to allow for it?

Mr PAINE - If it has to move the road, that is going to be a significant cost, so that will change the budget and we will have to come back completely. What we are looking at doing is whether there is existing space without going to the extent of moving the road but perhaps involving a change in design.

Mr BOOTH - Just to inform whether it can be done at present?

Mr PAINE - Correct.

Mr BOOTH - Chair, if you don't mind, I will just pass this through to you for Sarah to have a look at. It is a very brief submission - rather than calling you back in case there is something in there.

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CHAIR - If we are finished with this process, we can take evidence and advice from Bicycle Tasmania while Sarah and Adrian vacate their chairs for a moment. They can listen to that evidence and then we might have cause to get them back to the table or test the other evidence. For the moment, we might be at that stage; so if Sarah and Adrian would like to vacate their chairs, we will swear the other witness in.

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Ms MARY McPARLAND CYCLING SOUTH, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Welcome. We keep things informal in this committee. Do you mind if we address you by your Christian name? We have received at an earlier time a submission from Bicycle Tasmania.

Ms McPARLAND - I should clarify that I do not work for Bicycle Tasmania.

CHAIR - I understand that but we have that submission from them and you are representing Bicycle South.

Mr BROOKS - Do you support that submission?

Ms McPARLAND - I do. Cycling South is a regional cycling committee of the five Hobart councils whereas Bicycle Tasmania is a community group representing membership made up of residents of Tasmania.

Mr BROOKS - Have you seen the submission?

Ms McPARLAND - I have.

CHAIR - We will hear your evidence and then test that, if you like.

Ms McPARLAND - Okay. I have been involved in this process since May 2010 when DIER invited me in for an initial discussion around the plans for the Rokeby Road upgrade and the opportunity for active transport connections. Consistently all along, I have said that I believe that there is a need to not just replace the existing pathway that is currently there between Buckingham Drive and the fire station at Rokeby, but to extend it through Rokeby because we have a lot of growth happening at Oakdowns near the police academy; it is a big growth area.

We also have residents in Rokeby who need to move through Rokeby and currently what exists is Grange Road West. It is a quiet road but it is not appropriate for families with young children to be riding on it. They are intimidated by that. The alternative is a footpath which is a narrow, quite decrepit footpath with driveway crossings. It seems to me that if you are going to upgrade the road corridor for one user group - which is motor vehicles - you should also be upgrading that corridor for other active transport modes.

The whole way through as part of the budget allocation, there is not any funding for actually constructing the path beyond the fire station - which I accept; that is fine. But there was scope to include that in further stages of Rokeby road development because there is still the section in front of the Howrah Fruit Market to be done and through Rokeby that will also be done in the future as well.

All I wanted to see was allocation of space for a path to go in between the Rokeby Road upgrade and Grange Road West as a medium between the two - to actually have a pathway providing a continuous, good quality experience for anyone using it - not just bike riders, but walkers, people pushing prams and people in mobility scooters.

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We have Shoreline Shopping Centre not very far along and we know that a lot of people walk along the existing pathway to get there. We also have proposals for another development on the corner of Pass Road. For people to be able to walk and cycle is really important and to not provide a current good standard piece of infrastructure when you have this major road project happening, is a real lost opportunity. I notice the comments on the sealed shoulder. A 2-metre-wide sealed shoulder is very generous but it caters for the very high intensity cyclists - they are athletes and they are only a small portion of the population. It is the rest of the population who enjoy riding bikes, and we know that they do. Over half of all Tasmanian households have access to bikes but they are not riding them. The primary reason is that they do not feel safe riding on the roads and they want good bike networks to ride on. Unless we start providing separated off-road pathways, there is a whole level of Tasmanians who are excluded from participating in bike riding. They will put the bike on the car and drive to the inner city cycleway to ride but they should be able to ride in their local areas as well.

I am pleased to hear that DIER will be looking at how they can fit a path in but I just wish that it had been done earlier because I have been asking for it for two and a half years. At every meeting I have had, we have not seen or looked at how it might be fitted in. It has not really been on the radar, even though DIER has a walking and cycling policy around trying to improve active transport networks.

Mr BOOTH - With what you would like to see, you are happy to make sure that the design allows for it to be put in at some point in time but not necessarily tomorrow.

Ms McPARLAND - It is what they have provided so far; the first section they did at Oceana Drive was a very good, high quality concrete path and council now maintains that. But the infrastructure is built to a standard that is of good quality and it will last a long time and maintenance is minimal. What is being proposed as part of the Rokeby Road section between Buckingham Drive and the fire station is also good quality concrete path and the council now maintains that. But the infrastructure is built to a standard that is good quality and it will last a long time - maintenance is quite minimal.

What is being proposed as part of the Rokeby Road section between Buckingham Drive and the fire station is very good quality too - a 3-metre wide concrete path, very good standard.

Mr BOOTH - And that's off-road.

Ms McPARLAND - That's off-road, and that's catering for probably 80 per cent of people who will ride. The on-road shoulders - catering for those athletic cyclists who are out training - and that's not the majority of the population; the 2-metre shoulder, they will be very comfortable in that. It would be very rare to find a car - that is more an emergency stopping lane, it's not a car parking lane - so that user group will be fine. But it's the user groups of families, novice riders - they are not being well catered for.

Mr BOOTH - To make it clear for the record, as far as your organisation is concerned, a lined-off section on the side of the highway does not constitute what you regard as a proper access route for alternative transport modes, like walking, cycling and family cycling etcetera?

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Ms McPARLAND - We did support the widening of it for that high intensity group but they will ride on anything, but it's not for the majority. The majority need a higher quality and more separation from traffic. Council is also looking at a path at the moment between the police station in Rokeby through to Lauderdale.

So it's getting that continuous path and to have the middle bit in Rokeby sort-of disappear and you have to start using a road for that middle bit is a lost opportunity.

Mr BROOKS - And if we upgrade the road to a point where it can't be added into the future.

Ms McPARLAND - That is my concern - if it's not in the designs, saying, 'If only we'd moved that over half a metre', 'If only that pole hadn't been there', 'If only that had been shifted across in the original design, we could have fitted a path in' - I would hate to see that opportunity lost simply because it wasn't designed in at the beginning.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms McPARLAND - Thank you.

Me McPARLAND WITHDREW.

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CHAIR - Can I go to what might be a consideration: that shared pathway adjacent to Grange Road East, which we walked on this morning, how far down does that continue past, say, the fire station or Pass Road? Where we parked our vehicles is about where it stops, doesn't it?

Mr PAINE - Correct.

CHAIR - Would it be an opportunity, rather than to rip up and rehabilitate the existing road when the new road is constructed, to use some of that for a continuation of that shared pathway? You have a perfectly constructed bitumen road which you could divert down - it is 200 metres if I get the -

Mr PAINE - The existing road wouldn't get you very far before it intersects with the new road.

CHAIR - Yes, that's right, but it picks up a couple of hundred metres, Adrian, just looking at the changes from 13.40 down to 15.40.

Mr PAINE - That could certainly be one of the options we look at. We obviously hadn't considered doing anything with cycle much beyond this point. So that would be something we could look at.

CHAIR - Because Mary has just indicated to the committee that between Buckingham Drive, and where that shared one concludes at the moment, that that is well used for the majority of people so it seems to be an opportunity that you have this perfectly sealed highway which is there at the moment. It might well serve a purpose - and I accept your point that it terminates - but at some later stage you could swing back onto the Range Road easy.

CHAIR - Any questions of Adrian and Sarah subsequent to hearing from Mary?

Mr BROOKS - I wanted to hear the thoughts of DIER now in the light of the evidence that was just given, whether you support, don't support, agree or don't agree on that evidence.

Ms BOYLE - The evidence I heard was in relation to the potential and the opportunity. Adrian has committed in the last few days to ensuring, through that more constrained area, through the houses, that that opportunity is investigated for potential in the future.

In terms of the existing pathway, it is the council's shared cycleway. It is their responsibility. We are connecting into it so we are providing the continuity and the connections of Pass Road. Pass Road has a whole new facility that is separate from the road. There is improved connectivity and safety for off-road cyclists because of the facility we are putting in at Pass Road.

Mr BOOTH - On Pass Road, you said you were improving the connectivity with the current, shared pathway. Would those shared pathways, if you have this expertise in regard to those things, would you normally put an underpass, for example, for a shared pathway crossing a road with the traffic volumes at Pass Road? What is the normal thing? Do you have that expertise to tell us?

Ms BOYLE - In a situation like this - this is an at grade traffic signalised intersection - so anybody wanting to cross from Pass Road onto the existing cycleway would use the

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pedestrian signals at the traffic lights. DIER does not generally support underpasses, primarily for security reasons; they are not preferred by the public. At grade, where it's visible and there will be pedestrian lights.

Mr BOOTH - This one is obviously high enough volume to put traffic lights in there. They are also there for the car, aren't they, to be able to cross on to the highway and off et cetera?

Ms BOYLE - Yes.

Mr BOOTH - But normally a pedestrian crossing with a light would be the way you would normally do it, would it?

Ms BOYLE - Yes.

Mr BOOTH - Is there some standard of so many vehicle movements there per day to decide whether you put in a walk, don't walk-type pedestrian crossing?

Ms BOYLE - In terms of having separate pedestrian lights as part of the traffic light package?

Mr BOOTH - Perhaps not even having traffic lights. If there is a road where a shared pathway then crosses a highway or a road, like a DIER type of road, would you always put a pedestrian crossing across there? Would you put lights?

Ms BOYLE - In an environment where, because of the growth of this area, normally approved subdivisions, there is going to be a significant increase in pedestrian and cycling or other alternate car movements. This has been signalised on the basis of this future expected subdivision growth. Yes, I suppose in a technical sense, the trigger to signalise it has been based on the future protection of car movements from these subdivisions.

Mr BOOTH - Why, in this case, have you put signalised traffic lights rather than a roundabout?

Ms BOYLE - I don't know. I will have to take that question on notice. The roundabout in a situation like this would certainly have a bigger land take and land impact. But in terms of the process we went through to confirm the signalisation approach, I will have to take that on notice.

Mr BOOTH - Is there a preference in terms of safety with traffic lights as opposed to roundabouts?

Ms BOYLE - From an alternate user's perspective, roundabouts are not preferred for safety. For cyclists and pedestrians, roundabouts are a higher risk environment than signalisation where pedestrians have that formal space and time to move. Roundabouts for cyclists and pedestrians are an increased risk environment.

CHAIR – Thanks, Sarah and Adrian.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.