

**THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET AT THE
ROCKY CAPE TAVERN ON FRIDAY, 25 AUGUST 2006.**

BASS HIGHWAY, SISTERS HILLS UPGRADE

Mr BRIAN WILLIAMS, CONSULTANT, PITT AND SHERRY; AND **Mr HEIN POORTNENAAR**, PROJECT MANAGER, DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE, ENERGY AND RESOURCES, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Harriss) - Welcome gentlemen. You are both familiar with the process. We were here only a few months ago to consider the first stage of the project. We had the opportunity of the site visit this morning and we thank you for the information provided to us and the extra detail on the design drawings, so we are familiar with what you intend to do in more detail. The submission itself is very detailed, so it is over to you both to speak to it and then we will have questions for you.

Mr POORTENAAR - Thank you Mr Chairman. I will first go through the background of the project and then update the committee on the progress. Then I will hand over to Brian Williams who will deal with the technical aspects of the project, and I will then make the closing remarks.

The background: following a number of high profile road crashes in the Sisters Hills area, and a public meeting in April 2003, the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources worked with the Burnie, Waratah/Wynyard and Circular Head councils, the Cradle Coast Authority, the RACT and the community to develop a funding submission to upgrade approximately 15 kilometres of road in the Sisters Hills area to improve road safety outcomes. It was strongly focused on the safety improvements in the topographically constrained Sisters Hills area. The submission was sent to the Deputy Prime Minister in August 2004 with the full support of the Bass Highway Working Group. The Australian Government approved funding for four specific projects under the AusLink Roads to Recovery Regional Fund. One of those projects was the Bass Highway project at Sisters Hills.

These are commitments that featured in the coalition's election platform prior to the last election. The Australian Government's commitment for Sisters Hills is up to \$15 million on a dollar-for-dollar basis. In its May 2005 Budget, the State Government matched the Australian Government's commitment enabling the project to commence.

The first thing we did was review our estimates to determine what we could deliver for \$30 million. It was determined that only the five high priority projects could be delivered for \$30 million. The five projects extend from Myalla Road over Sisters Hills to a point just east of Rocky Cape Road - 12.8 kilometres. The upgrade improves alignment; widens the road, providing a 3.5-metre lane and 1-metre shoulder; and provides overtaking lanes to make a safer road and improved travel times. There are a number of lower-priority projects not being undertaken at either end of the project. However, if it becomes apparent that there is funding still left towards the end of the projects that we are committed to, then we will have some

designs in the drawer to complete those projects and to make sure that we spend the full \$30 million.

The first two projects, Dallas Hill and Pollards Road and the Myalla to Rulla Road, were previously approved by the parliamentary committee and were tendered in 2005. The contracts were awarded to Shaw Contracting and are proceeding on time and to budget. Construction commenced in February 2006 on Rulla Road to Myalla Road and was completed by the end of April - some months ahead of schedule. Construction on Pollards Road commenced in March but it was decided to leave the pavement works until spring, due to the wet April. Construction on Dallas Hill earthworks commenced in April and was similarly suspended over winter and has just recommenced. It is anticipated that Pollards Road and Dallas Hill will be completed by November - that is the commitment - but we think it might even be a month earlier. It is proposed that the construction of the next stage will commence as the previous stages are being completed. Preliminary designs for the remaining four projects are complete, and approvals are being progressed. It is proposed to obtain approvals for all the remaining projects as part of stage 2 rather than require more approvals at stage 3 in a year's time.

Approvals under way are Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works RPDC for resumption of prime agricultural land, which has been approved; DPIWE permit to remove threatened species, which has been approved; Federal Department of Environment referral for the giant freshwater lobster, which is under way; a development application to Waratah/Wynyard Council, which is under way; also a separate development application to Waratah/Wynyard Council for closing Rulla Road north, which is under way; a development application to Circular Head Council which is under way; and a reserve activity assessment for the Parks and Wildlife Service for works on a reserve. There is no road reserve currently over the summit and we require approval to construct the road on the reserve. The road reserve will eventually be acquired.

Land acquisition for stage 2 is under way and accommodation works for stage 2 are largely agreed with owners. Final designs are complete for the project east of summit and substantially complete for the project west of summit. It is proposed to tender the project east of summit this Saturday and the project west of summit in September. Both projects will commence in November and be complete by the end of 2007. Preliminary designs are complete in the last two projects, which are Wilsons Creek Bridge and west of Montumana. The Wilsons Creek Bridge project requires the demolition of two houses and replacement houses will be built ahead of the Wilsons Creek Bridge contract, which commences in November 2007. The houses are subject to a DA and these have been agreed with owners and lodged with councils.

The public contact plan providing information to the community was developed and is being implemented. Plans of the various stages are on display at Burnie, Wynyard and Circular Head council chambers. Updates are regularly placed in the newspapers and letters and brochures are sent to adjacent owners and other stakeholders at key milestones.

The Bass Highway Working Group continues to be involved in the project and is a useful forum for input for the key stakeholders, especially regarding any changes of scope that we are planning.

I will not go through all the projects' budgets, which have been listed out, except to summarise. The first two projects, which were tendered late last year are under way and will be complete by November. The next two projects - east of summit and west of summit - will be started in November or December 2006 and be completed by the following Christmas - 2007 - at which point the last two projects - replacement of Wilsons Creek Bridge and west of Montumana - will start in November 2007 and be completed by December 2008.

I would now like to hand over to Brian Williams, project manager for Pitt and Sherry, for the technical aspects of the project.

Mr WILLIAMS - The existing Bass Highway does not provide the road user with a consistent driving environment. The curves are not consistent in radius. There are some compound curves which tighten and make driving difficult. The sight distance is often inappropriate for the likely travelling speed of motorists. All this increases the demands on drivers and most probably explains - at least to some extent - the poor crash record which is the reason for the project's existence. The objective of the project is to provide a predictable road environment with the aim of improving the crash record.

Specifically the improvements that are being made on all the sections we are considering today are widening the lanes from 3 metres to 3.5 metres; providing a sealed shoulder of one-metre width, so that the seal will generally widen from about 6 metres at the moment to 9 metres. That provides greater benefit in loss-of-control accidents by having a wider area to recover. The pavement will also be strengthened to cater for the anticipated traffic loading over the next 20 years. The alignment of the road is also being improved generally to the 80 kph guidelines provided by Austroads, which is a common design speed used for road improvements in Tasmania.

Specifically on each of the projects: on the summit project there will be right-turn lanes at Devils Elbow Road and Rulla Road and there will be a G-turn at Whites Road to improve safety for turning vehicles. There will be climbing lanes for both eastbound and westbound traffic coming from near the base of the hill, over the summit. There is no eastbound climbing lane at all at present and only a short westbound climbing lane. There will be a significant lowering of the crest at the top of the hill to improve sight distance and the side roads - that is, Devils Elbow Road, Whites Road and Rulla Road South - will be realigned to bring them in at right angles to the highway. There is some rationalisation of accesses - some have been closed and some have been moved to more appropriate positions - and all accesses have been reconstructed to match the new highway. The straightening of the highway at the western end requires the acquisition of one house on this part of the project.

There will be truck-stopping bays provided to replace the existing informal arrangement at the top of the hill. They will not be opposite one another; they will be just on the start of the downgrade so that once the truck stops he can then accelerate

as he then comes back into the traffic flow on the downhill out of the truck bay. On this project we are proposing to close Rulla Road north, and that is subject to approval from Waratah/Wynyard Council under the Local Government (Highways) Act.

On the Wilsons Creek project, there will be the same widening as is occurring on the summit project. We are constructing a new culvert on Wilsons Creek; the existing one is deficient in terms of strength to carry the heavy loads. The opportunity has been taken to make that improvement to the structure. To do that we are building that alongside on the northern side of the existing structure. On that, the climbing lane from Pollards Road heading westwards will be extended over the crest immediately west of the road to give a longer overtaking lane. To make these improvements, two houses need to be acquired on that section.

West of Montumana is fairly straightforward. There is some acquisition of agricultural land in that section and reconstruction of access is the main thing, along with general alignment improvements that we are making throughout the project. The project benefits include: providing greater sight distances, both along the highway and at the junctions and accesses; improving safety with wider pavement and shoulders; considerable improvement in safety barriers - not many places have safety barriers at the moment and they should have. Where practical we are removing roadside hazards and increasing the number of accesses of junctions. All those contribute to a safer road. We are providing a new, smoother road surface. The existing one is out of shape. We are improving alignment to provide more consistent travel speed and to improve overtaking opportunities.

We have looked at environmental aspects. Agricultural land has been assessed to identify prime agricultural land. As Hein mentioned, where it has been necessary to gain approval from the RPDC to convert agricultural land to road reserve, botanical, historical heritage and Aboriginal heritage surveys have been undertaken. The most significant botanical entity is the freshwater crayfish, which is present in north-west creeks. We have incorporated procedures in the contract documents to have creeks surveyed immediately before construction and to relocate any lobsters. You can't do the survey before then because the lobsters might return in the intervening period. Some spotted-tail quoll and eastern barred bandicoot have been identified in the area, mainly through road kill records. There is not much we can do about that.

There is a small patch of showy willow-herb at the western end of the project. It is on the Tasmanian threatened species list. We have a permit to take one. It is nestled among weeds; if you deal with the weeds then the showy willow-herb can't be saved. The other major botanical issue concerns phytophora near the summit, in the white gravel. We have procedures in place to ensure there is no spread of phytophora. That has been agreed with DPIWE.

No Aboriginal issues were identified during the survey. There are no registered Aboriginal sites. There is nothing on the National Heritage list, the Register of National Estate, the Tasmanian Heritage register, or listed in either of the planning schemes. We have spoken to all the landowners at least once as part of the design procedure. Those landowners on the east of cutting section have been spoken to more than once - some of them quite often - to have them agree to the accommodation works that have to be undertaken.

Mr BEST - The Rulla Road and its intersection fall short of Australian standards; it would not meet appropriate safety standards. Predominantly, motorists turn left at that intersection. Could it be accommodated as a left-only turn, towards Wynyard?

Mr POORTENAAR - I realise that most people will be turning east towards Sisters Hills, which does not require them to cross the traffic. We could provide a slip lane. There is a limit to the distance we could extend it because the overtaking lane up to Myalla Road starts there. There has to be a separation, otherwise people are confused about whether it is an overtaking lane or a slip lane. If you are heading east you still have a problem with merging traffic when you are going relatively slowly and someone is coming up very fast behind you.

Mr BEST - So you don't think it is feasible to accommodate a left-hand turn from Rulla Road?

Mr POORTENAAR - We could provide a bit of slip lane to allow some acceleration, but you would still -

Mr BEST - Yes, we noticed the short distance between the hill and intersection, looking west. It's about five to six seconds at the speed those vehicles were travelling.

Mr POORTENAAR - At the moment you would be lucky to have two seconds. You would still have the visibility problem and you would still need to merge relatively slow traffic with fast traffic.

Mr BEST - That would be a matter to pursue with council?

Mr POORTENAAR - The process of closing Rulla Road is with council. If council felt there was some way to alleviate it, then they could make recommendations. They can suggest to DIER that the road be kept open and that the design incorporate it. DIER will have concerns about safety.

Mr BEST - So it not possible to meet the required standard within the budget? You would need a dedicated lane?

Mr POORTENAAR - If you are trying to merge traffic that has accelerated to a reasonable speed then you would need to merge them on the climbing lane. That would not be desirable because we want to keep a separation between junction and climbing lane.

Mr BEST - Then there is the other issue of separating the lane. How would you make it a dedicated left turn? Would you have something in the middle of the road - a traffic island?

Mr POORTENAAR - Normally have just have a no-right-turn sign.

Mr BEST - And hope people do the right thing?

Mr POORTENAAR - Yes.

Ms O'BYRNE - If Rulla Road is closed, the options are, if travelling west, to go along Devils Elbow. Is there is an option to go left to get onto the highway?

Mr POORTENAAR - Yes; you can go east along Devils Elbow Road.

Ms O'BYRNE - What is the quality of that road?

Mr POORTENAAR - It is narrow, but there is reasonable visibility. We spoke to council about it. They felt it was the same standard as a lot of their roads.

Ms O'BYRNE - Is that an adequate standard? That doesn't give me a picture of its standard.

Mr POORTENAAR - It is probably an acceptable standard, given the traffic using it.

Ms O'BYRNE - Will that increase if you close the road?

Mr POORTENAAR - Only through local residents. There would not be additional traffic.

Ms O'BYRNE - There is an argument that heavy rain decreases the quality of that road.

Mr POORTENAAR - It is a gravel road and it is moderately steep. It would be typical of a gravel road in the wet. It would be acceptable. The main problem is that it is narrow. An oncoming truck would require you to back down to a passing bay.

Ms O'BYRNE - What are the sides of the road like?

Mr POORTENAAR - The main narrow section is over the creek, which is on a causeway. We are proposing to put up a wire-rope barrier to prevent people from running into the dam.

CHAIR - Regarding the western section of Devils Elbow Road, is that a fairly low-standard road? The access to the Bass Highway through Rulla Road is at least a reasonable stretch of road, and not steep.

Mr POORTENAAR - I agree that Devils Elbow Road is of a low standard.

Mr HARRISS - If the north Rulla Road is closed, would the department be sympathetic to some upgrading of both the west and east Devils Elbow Road to accommodate some additional traffic?

Mr POORTENAAR - I can't comment on whether the department would consider that. The main focus of this project is the highway. It is possible that we might have money left over at the end. However, there might be issues with funding not being spent on the Bass Highway, especially Federal money.

CHAIR - Nonetheless, what is happening on the highway is having an impact on other roads, particularly this one. I appreciate the problem with expenditure on other than the Bass Highway. You indicated to us that the first section of the project, which is complete, came in under budget. How much under budget was it?

Mr POORTENAAR - It was about \$2.7 million and it was budgeted for \$3.2 million.

CHAIR - So \$500 000 under budget and that is with the underpass factored in which you expected might have in fact blown the budget, even moderately so. Your half million dollars under budget, including the underpass, is of some benefit. With regard Mr Best's question about the possibility of a left turn only, from Rulla Road north, you indicated that some sort of an acceleration lane would need to be provided but if we then go to the Devils Elbow Road intersection with the Bass Highway, the upgraded intersection which you are proposing there, what are the provisions for turning left out of there in terms of an acceleration lane or are we on two-lane highways?

Mr POORTENAAR - No, it is a single lane downhill. You would not normally provide an acceleration lane for a junction like that. I understood Brenton was talking about an acceleration lane at Rulla Road, which has been suggested by some of the residents. Generally if you have good visibility, and there you would have the 100 kph visibility, you wouldn't need an acceleration lane; you would be able to reach the same speed as the downhill traffic within the five seconds.

CHAIR - But isn't it true that there is downhill traffic if you turn left out of Rulla Road?

Mr POORTENAAR - Yes but there the problem is that you don't have enough view; you would have a much more limited time to accelerate because you wouldn't be able to see the traffic coming.

CHAIR - Yes, but isn't it also true that with the extra works which you are providing west of Rulla Road north, substantial excavation of the bank to provide a pretty reasonable sight distance, we are going to be increasing that sight distance substantially to the right of Rulla Road north if we are coming out to the west of Rulla Road north?

Mr POORTENAAR - Yes. It is possible to improve the sight distance but there is a limit as to how much you can improve it from the topography.

Ms O'BYRNE - Isn't the argument about the bus being able to stop there because the bus has increased visibility options, quite substantially increased visibility options rather than just minimal?

Mr POORTENAAR - Yes, the bus being further up the hill.

Mr WILLIAMS - The movement of the bus is a separate issue, I think. The orientation of the bus when it stops is in line with the highway. It is not on a curve so he can use his rear vision mirrors to make a decision about whether to leave the bus stop and breach the traffic or not. It is about positioning the bus in the best position.

CHAIR - Won't the sight distance from Rulla Road north to the west be every bit as much as the sight distance from the west of Devils Elbow Road intersection after the excavations are done at the Rulla Road north area?

Mr WILLIAMS - I don't think I could answer, without doing a bit of work, exactly how much sight distance there is.

Mr POORTENAAR - When they did the original design, which was to keep the junction open, they designed it at an 80 kph distance, whereas the west one does have about a 100 kph sight distance, so it was better at the western end.

CHAIR - I must say that after the opening questions by Mr Best, I'm struggling to understand why you can't facilitate a left turn only, given that the traffic movements turning left out of Rulla Road north would in essence be no different from turning left out of Devils Elbow Road. At Devils Elbow Road we have no merging lane. You are suggesting that you could possibly build a merged lane out of Rulla Road north but you probably don't need it because of the topography being essentially the same. It's a downhill run when we come out of Rulla Road north, the same as there is a downhill run out of Devils Elbow Road. Your comment to my question earlier was that coming out of Devils Elbow Road you don't need the merged lane because you can get up to speed pretty quickly because of the sight distance. The sight distance I saw at Rulla Road this morning is incredibly substandard right now but when I pictured the bank being excavated substantially I would have thought we'd be seeing right up to the corners at some 300 metres away. I would expect that you would be at least 300, probably even 400 metres to the west of Rulla Road with clear sight distance to turn left.

Mr POORTENAAR - I think it wasn't as much as that in the original design but with more excavation I would have thought it should be able to be achieved. The other aspect that the chief traffic engineer had a concern with was that basically we wanted to rationalise junctions. Half of accidents are at junctions and here we have three junctions serving a handful of houses. Obviously it is very dangerous at the moment and they could be improved to some extent. The other aspect is that it is a different speed environment. The traffic coming down the hill at Devils Elbow Road is generally going slower because they are on a down grade, whereas at Rulla Road they speed up because they know they have a hill to climb up, so the traffic, as you would have noticed, is going a lot faster at Rulla Road. So, yes, the matter really was prompted by the sponsor of the project and the chief traffic engineer. Originally we designed it to keep it open but obviously it had limitations in what we could achieve because a large part of the driver was to get this tendered and not have problems getting it approved but the department felt that it would be a better safety outcome to close that junction and the matter is now in the hands of the council and the magistrate. Regarding the safety report on that junction and the community's concerns, the council and the magistrate will make a decision on that evidence. At the moment if the answer is either way we can accommodate that but there were reasons that the chief traffic engineer had for closing it.

CHAIR - The predominant reason seems to be from that contribution you have just made the rationalisation of accesses, not a safety matter, because you did say that the sight distances could be substantially improved. My proposition to you is that they will be substantially improved. I said 400 metres; at the very worst, 300 metres, I would have thought, from what I saw there this morning and from what I see on these plans in front of me with the chainages set down. Am I right in saying not that the sight distances could be improved but they will be as a result of the cutting which is proposed to provide the bus lay-by, if you wish?

Mr POORTENAAR - If we were keeping the junction open we would have to provide more cutting. At the moment the cutting that is proposed wouldn't improve the sight distance sufficiently to be safe.

CHAIR - Really?

Mr POORTENAAR - I don't believe so.

Mr WILLIAMS - The cutting that we had designed when we were keeping the junction open is larger than the cutting that we have now with moving the bus stop up there and space for the bus shelter and those sort of things, so it would need to go back further than we are currently proposing.

CHAIR - Can you give us an estimation? You must know because you had a design for keeping the road open.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes. It was 3 or 4 metres further back.

CHAIR - What's the extent of excavation proposed with closing the road?

Mr WILLIAMS - We haven't got that on the cross sections. That's a hard question because we haven't got the detailed plans of what is currently proposed. This was the original design.

CHAIR - So you don't have a cross section which would indicate that excavation?

Mr POORTENAAR - I have the plan in the car. I could go and get it.

CHAIR - Yes, I would like to be clear as to the intention of the excavation.

The committee suspended from 12.41 p.m. to 12.42 p.m.

Mr WILLIAMS - The main difference in the cutting is not a lot. The area closer to Rulla Road north will have less cutting by probably 2 or 3 metres than it would if we had the junction left open. It pushes back on the western part of the cutting as we have widened that to get the space to allow the bus shelter to be in there and the footpath.

CHAIR - By that widening to accommodate both the shelter and the footpath, that of itself provides substantial sight distance improvement, doesn't it?

Mr WILLIAMS - The bus shelter will restrict the sight distance. We are just moving the existing bus shelter. That will be sitting there and that will be the limit on the sight distance. We would finish the works as proposed.

I would like to add one thing. On Mr Best's proposal to have it left only, I don't think that is a wise idea because if we cater for that only and provide the appropriate sight distances, it is hard to see how that is going to be controlled and stop people making the right turns. You can put up a sign 'No right turn' but some people tend to ignore signs and if they come down the road there will be nothing physical in the road to stop them from making that turn and so people might make the turn without the appropriate sight distance. So I would counsel against left only.

Ms O'BYRNE - On the basis of driver behaviour?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes. If it's going to be open it should be open for all turns and designed appropriately.

CHAIR - You will hear from Mrs Moles and Mr Douma when they give their evidence that, at a site meeting, they discovered that one of the main reasons for closing the northern access was to enable trucks travelling east to gain speed before the overtaking lane. Were either of you at that site meeting?

Mr POOTENAAR - I was, yes.

CHAIR - Do you know who provided that as a reason for the closure? Indeed, was that reason provided?

Mr POOTENAAR - We mentioned truck speed, and their tendency to increase speed as they approach the hill to try to get a run up it. I don't think the intention was to encourage them to do it; that's just the way they need to operate to drive up hills.

CHAIR - If the people at the site meeting interpreted those comments as the chief reason for closing the intersection, would you understand why they would be dissatisfied?

Mr POOTENAAR - I don't think it is a reason. The main reasons are to rationalise junctions and for safety due to high speeds. The current substandard sight distance can be improved to a limited extent. I don't think it was a reason per se; it was just an issue to be considered in terms of safety.

Ms O'BYRNE - If that is not a dominant factor in closing that access, have reduced speed limits been investigated as a way of making that access safer? I understand the reasons for closing junctions because of the preponderance of accidents, but have we looked at that option?

Mr POOTENAAR - We surveyed all the junctions, and that one had about four vehicle movements per day. You would not inconvenience the through traffic for that low volume.

Ms O'BYRNE - Regarding the eastern Devils Elbow Road access, how many vehicles currently use it?

Mr POOTENAAR - I don't have that information with me, but it was similar.

Ms O'BYRNE - There are more houses down the other end of that road. Instead of turning left, they have an access road of roughly 800 metres, which then comes out on the highway. What is the current usage of that road?

Mr POOTENAAR - It was similar; four to six vehicle movements per day. We do have the data but I don't have it with me.

Ms O'BYRNE - There are a number of houses on that road?

Mr POOTENAAR - No; there were no houses further to the east.

Ms O'BYRNE - So the only people using the road would be the ones currently using this left-hand turn?

Mr POOTENAAR - Yes; some of the people who live there use that access rather than Rulla Road north.

Ms O'BYRNE - When you determined which junction had to close, was visibility the only factor that suggested use of the other road, rather than maintaining Rulla Road north?

Mr POOTENAAR - Yes; it was partly to do with the consultations. Some people preferred to use that junction rather than Rulla Road.

Mr WILLIAMS - Both ends of Devils Elbow Road serve a couple of rural properties as well, so they would probably have a bit more traffic than Rulla Road.

Ms O'BYRNE - At both ends?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes. That also gives more direct access to the east and west for all residents and users of Devils Elbow Road.

CHAIR - It was important to flesh out those issues with regard to Rulla Road. I appreciate the reasons from the point of view of safety and access rationalisation. Some of these issues regarding access to major highways are just facts of life out in the country. Rulla Road north has been there for a long time so I understand the sensitivity of local people who do not want to lose a familiar road with its closure. We drove over that section of Devils Elbow Road this morning. It is not a good piece of road, I accept that, but it is not a great distance either for people heading west.

Ms O'BYRNE - Is Devils Elbow Road east better or worse than Devils Elbow Road west?

Mr BEST - Neither is too flash.

Mr POOTENAAR - I'd say it's about the same, though probably less steep, and it does not have the Devils Elbow. It is probably a bit narrower.

Mr BEST - I'm not confident about some of these design features. I know that this is an improvement, and you have done a great job. The last section was a great success. However, regarding southern Rulla Road, there are about six houses up in the hills. A vehicle turning towards Wynyard is on the outside of the Bass Highway curve, with a better view than on the other side, but then has to cross the traffic lanes and accelerate to get up the hill. How much better is that than entering the road on the other side? You end up where the vehicles come from northern Rulla Road onto the Bass Highway, then you have to gain speed to climb the hill. You have a better view, but how much better? How far along the highway will drivers be able to see?

Mr WILLIAMS - I don't know the precise sight distance, but it will be better on the outside of that curve. The fundamental difference is that south Rulla Road is a dead-end road. We can't close it off because you would not have access to the properties. You have to

have that access. We have designed an access to improve that situation. The vehicles are at right angles so that they can see better. There was an opportunity to close Rulla Road north. The dip is not a desirable place for an access, so there is no alternative.

Mr BEST - Yes; I'm not trying to run a case for or against. Is that the only design option for Rulla Road south within the budget?

Mr WILLIAMS - I think so, yes.

Mr BEST - You don't know the exact sight-distance improvement?

Mr WILLIAMS - We could find out. We would need to look at the three-dimensional model on the computer to work it out.

Mr BEST - What would be the additional cost for a dedicated left slip lane for Rulla Road north? If you had it a bit wider, would that improve safety for people turning east from Rulla Road south? There would be a larger margin in which to accelerate to get up the hill.

Mr POOTENAAR - The main issue is that we like to keep a separation from the start of the climbing lane. If you provide a slip lane then the people coming down the hill will become confused and think it is part of the slow lane for climbing. They would then have to get out of it to get back on the main part of the road. Generally the C-type junctions do not include an acceleration lane.

Mr BEST - Are there only two dedicated lanes?

Mr POOTENAAR - Yes; one lane in either direction.

Mr BEST - One lane heading east and one heading west?

Mr POOTENAAR - Yes.

Mr WILLIAMS - At the junction. As well, there is a right-turn lane for Rulla Road south. Anybody who needs to turn right into Rulla Road south from Smithton has a sheltered lane because it is near the bottom of the hill. Traffic coming from behind is travelling fast so there would be a potential for rear-end accidents. Therefore we have provided the extra lane for the right turn. The road is three lanes across here.

Ms O'BYRNE - What would it cost to upgrade the junction, as opposed to closing it?

Mr POOTENAAR - I don't think it's a huge cost; the decision was not based on cost. Given that we were already widening the road, the additional excavation to keep Rulla Road open would be in the order of \$50 000 extra. It is not substantial.

Mr BEST - With the Devils Elbow intersection that you are looking to upgrade, is that only to serve those houses which are missing out because of the proposed closure of Rulla Road?

Mr POOTENAAR - We would have had to upgrade it anyway because there is at least one truck trip per day into a nearby farm. We would have to get that truck off the through lanes.

Mr BEST - What would your thoughts be on closing Devils Elbow Road and perhaps looking at a better designs option for the Rulla Road intersection, if there was one?

Mr WILLIAMS - I am not sure the department can close that junction. It would need a complex planning process to do it. The planning permit for the way to Wynyard comes through to that property, a property served off Dunnings Road. Playing with that would be a fairly complex process, I think.

Mr BEST - There is a waste dump in there, is there?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes.

Ms O'BYRNE - And there are other rural properties as well?

Mr WILLIAMS - There is one rural property down Dunnings Road.

Ms O'BYRNE - You have consulted with the parents of the children who use the bus stop?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, just to determine who was using the bus stop.

Ms O'BYRNE - So you don't have an idea of their current movements in relation to crossing the road and moving up to the bus stop? I am just trying to get an idea of where children are coming from and how they are accessing the old bus stop and then the new bus stop. I put on the record my personal interest in this area.

Mr WILLIAMS - We have had a number of discussions with the bus operator about where he stops and we have talked to him about standards of the bus stops. Our understanding is that he is happy with those. As to where the children cross the road, we have made sure of the sight distance to get across the road, which probably isn't the case at all current bus stops. Some of them are not in good positions and a lot of the bus stops are very poor in standard. We anticipate that the parents who drop their kids at the bus stop - and not all the children get driven to the bus stop -

Ms O'BYRNE - Do you have any idea of how many children we are talking about in total - how many would be picked up at the bus stop?

Mr WILLIAMS - Currently I think it relates to two families - four or five kids.

Ms O'BYRNE - On each side of the road, or only on the southern side?

Mr WILLIAMS - It is a bit more complicated on Rulla Road south because the primary bus goes up Rulla Road, but the high school one doesn't. That is a very vexed question.

Ms O'BYRNE - So the primary bus would come down from the west -

Mr WILLIAMS - No, it comes the other way. It doesn't cross the road. In the morning he would come from Wynyard, so he comes along the highway and goes into Rulla Road. He goes down Montumana Road and then he goes right around in a big loop on Montumana Road and then goes back along the highway. In the afternoon he would do the same route in the opposite direction.

Ms O'BYRNE - One of the concerns that has been raised is that some of the children get dropped at the corner of the southern part of Rulla Road, they cross over the east side of the intersection to the present bus stop. There is a view that if they then have to cross over on the western side and go up a little bit further, their parents might come out into the road, drop them and then try to swing a U-turn into the bus stop to get out. If we are talking about managing driver behaviour in terms of safety, we might find that parents, instead of stopping at the corner and zipping back up the road, might turn left and try to do a U-turn into the bus bay and zip back around, so that effectively they are doing a circle in what is an extremely high traffic-use area, particularly for trucks.

As we said before, the issue about not having a turning left lane is that you can't manage driver behaviour to stop them turning right. Have we considered also the impact of how you manage the parents' behaviour when there's torrential rain and they think they will take the kids straight to the bus stop?

Mr WILLIAMS - There are a couple of alternatives there. They could get there a bit earlier and catch the bus in the westerly direction and not have kids cross the road at all.

Ms O'BYRNE - And do you think that they'll do that? Have you tried to get children ready early in the morning?

Mr WILLIAMS - I do that nearly every morning - to get my daughter ready on time.

Ms O'BYRNE - Most road safety inquiries do come down to driver error and driver behaviour as the cause of an accident. The majority of national studies have said that. I put a lot of weight on your comments before about not having a left-hand turn because drivers might still turn right. I understand entirely your fears there, I guess. Does that not also apply to what parents might do?

Mr WILLIAMS - It probably does and they may well do that but that would apply at any rural bus stop in this sort of situation where there is a local feeder road coming into the bus stop. Wherever the bus stop on the northern side of the road is located in this general area that issue will occur; it won't make any difference whether the bus stop is here or here.

Ms O'BYRNE - But you are attempting to minimise the amount of traffic coming in onto this particular section of the road, for very good safety reasons, so we are looking at a minimisation process that we don't then want to escalate in another way.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, but the location of the bus stop on the northern side, whether it is here or here, is not going to change the parents' behaviour. There'll be a widening to cater for taking the bus off the road so that the bus can safely stop and for traffic to go, which is not the case at all the current bus stops so I don't think that there's a connection

between where the bus stop is located along the road and what the parents are going to do.

Ms O'BYRNE - When we talked about having a turning left you said that by relocating the current bus facility, the shelter, you are not necessarily improving the visibility because you are going to have this big old white galvanised facility. Have you looked at getting the clear perspex ones? Have you looked at upgrading them and using a more modern design of bus stop that won't necessarily impact on visibility or is that an impossible thing to do? I notice that they do them in some areas so that you have a clearer line of sight.

Mr WILLIAMS - You could change it to a clear material. You have to have a clear material that is strong enough to withstand the rigours of time and maybe unwanted attention. I reckon it's a security thing, the clear-clad bus stops.

Ms O'BYRNE - Would it make a difference to the line of sight issue that was raised before?

Mr WILLIAMS - It would improve it a little, yes.

Mr BEST - I thought it was important to note a couple of issues. One is that we noticed that whilst there are opportunities to have quite straight sections of road, in design features are chosen to maintain some curving. You might want to put that on the record and that it is really a safety issue. People might question that design later on.

Mr WILLIAMS - Generally the proposed works follow the existing road, except for the piece between the top of Sisters Hills westward to Montumana Road or just short of it where we have kept the curved alignment. We did look at a number of alignments, a couple of which were straight, but we were going to get a strait of about a bit over a kilometre. The current long left strait across Pollards Road has a number of issues with speeding already and we thought it was more appropriate to keep the curved alignment to not encourage excessive speed. That curved alignment is still going to meet the same design standard as the rest of the road but will be more consistent with the whole road between Rocky Cape and Sisters Creek to be curved - so you get a more consistent outcome. We think that is a better approach than the strait.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr JACOBUS DOUMA AND Mrs MOLLY MOLES WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Harriss) - Mrs Moles, would you speak first?

Mrs MOLES - First I want to draw the meeting's attention to the reduced number of junctions for Devils Elbow Road, the objective. Currently three junctions serve a handful of houses. The junction is in a dip where traffic, particularly trucks, are speeding to get up the next hill and get a head start on overtaking lanes, braking ability reduced due to grade, horizontal bend et cetera. They want to get the speed up before they get there. I do feel inclined to think that for safety the three junctions need to be

open - for various reasons. I did cite in my statement the bushfire emergency which really brought it home to me because we were in darkness and that little north junction was very handy because the western one at that time was closed. The western one is essential because of the trucks, because that was part of the agreement, that they would travel that way. I do feel concerned about the children walking 50 metres in the pouring rain to a relocated bus stop. You looked at it from the bus driver's point of view but I wondered if anybody had asked the children or their parents because you don't drop a child off at a corner to walk 50 metres and get soaked before they get to the bus stop. It's just a bit strange to me.

It seems to me that the northern junction could be left open to a left-hand turn because that's what we're doing at the moment and there's never been an accident there in all the years that I've been there - nearly 52 years. The accidents are much further west. In view of the various fancy driveways and duck in here and duck in there, I feel a bit sad to think that we'll lose the prospect of losing our chief access road when you see everything else very fancy. It doesn't seem fair. I'm not taking my bat and ball and going home but it just doesn't seem logical to me.

If the bus stop remained at the junction, I'd be very happy to volunteer a bit more land for them to have a safe bus stop there. By the look of the maps I got yesterday, my donkey paddock is shrinking considerably!

Laughter.

Mrs MOLES - But those surveying reports and the maps do prove that there will be much better visibility to the west. And as for the little bus shelter, it is not going to be sited in a traffic lane, is it? It is going to be in a bay, out of the visibility of people looking to the right. Now when I go out I look to the right; I count 11; I look to the left, have another quick look to the right and count some more, because there is room for one truck and two cars in that dip in the road. According to those maps, that bank will be gone and the bus stop will be there and the children will get wet if it rains! I do feel it is essential for the three to be left open. That is all I want to say.

CHAIR - Thank you. Are there any questions for Mrs Moles on her presentation?

Mr BEST - As a user, and having looked at the plan, do you believe there will be an improvement that will make the road safer? I do not mean just on your section of Rulla Road, but also the corresponding southern end where people have to come across two lanes? Do you think trucks will go faster?

Mrs MOLES - Well, there isn't really an alternative. They have to come across because that junction has to be there; it is just a matter of what is the safest.

Mr BEST - What do you see as an alternative then to the proposed bus stop section?

Mrs MOLES - For it to remain at the junction, but to have a drive-in. I made this point in my submission, where I said:

I am no engineer or road designer, but -

1. Rulla Road north access remain open - left turn only. Vehicles travelling west and wishing to access northern Devils Elbow Road are then only crossing one lane of oncoming traffic.

2. Bus stop to remain at the junction, but situated in large drive-in area. Road widened considerably and general visibility improved. Important - appropriate signs strategically placed. It just could work!'

Since receiving those maps I can see that the visibility west is definitely going to be improved. I wish it had been done 50 years ago! I would be very happy with a left turn only there.

Ms O'BYRNE - My only question comes back to the issue of driver behaviour. You only use it to turn left, and I am assuming the other local residents only use it to turn left. Say that your donkey paddock got so small that you decided you didn't want to live there anymore and somebody bought your property. If someone else ended up living in your house, do you think they would be tempted to turn right there?

Mrs MOLES - If there is a no right turn sign there, anybody with any brains at all would obey it.

Ms O'BYRNE - Yes. Unfortunately we can't do road safety on the basis of everybody being very smart.

Mrs MOLES - That is why the trucks have to be given priority so that they can get up speed before they get to the overtaking lane.

Ms O'BYRNE - Because we cannot guarantee that they would slow down.

Mrs MOLES - No. I think it is important to indicate in plenty of time.

Ms O'BYRNE - Have you spoken to the parents of the children who use the bus stop or is this just from your local knowledge and what you see when you are turning there?

Mrs MOLES - I have seen three generations of children catching the bus there. They would be wet through in 50 metres unless the pathway is a covered way, and I haven't heard that it will be.

Ms O'BYRNE - I imagine that would be unlikely. We would then have every single bus stop in the State demanding a covered walkway.

Mrs MOLES - I have caught the bus there and I have seen a great many children there. But I do not know the children who catch the bus there now. I assumed that their parents would have put in a submission or have given thought to their welfare.

CHAIR - I have no questions. Mr Douma?

Mr DOUMA - When all the junctions on the highway have been standard upgraded, we still don't know the reason for closing down the north end. If we go out on the eastbound, we can turn left; for a right turn we have to go to Devils Elbow Road, and there is no right

turn provision for people there - you have to cross two lanes to get into Devils Elbow. I have no problem with the junction. What I don't like is the signs on the highway saying that this is a bypass lane. These signs in big letters mean that people speed up for the junctions, and at junctions there are people waiting to make left or right turns. If the people are dropping children off and they do the right thing, they have to drive around to the east or west to drop the kids off. I have been trying to work out the distance that we can see the traffic coming downhill, and wait until the road is clear in order to turn to the left. We go uphill and in the bypass lane there are cars passing. I know that there is a lot of truck traffic, and with the braking distance on trucks, it is always dangerous in wet weather. Over Rulla creek it is a bottleneck - it is too narrow. I always come down and give people warnings that I am turning right and have no problems. But what happens in traffic is that people see the signs that there is a passing lane, so they speed up, and that is what causes the problem. It is not only the trucks, it is private cars as well. The closure of the Rulla Road northern junction makes it more dangerous for a lot of people. As Mollie says, it is possible that people can make a U-turn. I hate that and I hate the fact that people are speeding. It would be easy to make the road wider over Rulla Creek. It is better to make the highway properly so that it will last into the future than to spend it on Devils Elbow Road. I think you should make the highway safe. I have talked to politicians and urged them not to be hasty on this matter. 'Don't be hasty, look at the overall situation.' People come out from the south of Rulla Road have to cross at the T-junction and that is more dangerous in that they have to turn to the right to go east.

CHAIR - Thank you Mr Douma. I understand your position with regard to Rulla Road and east Devils Elbow Road as well. Are there any questions for Mr Douma? I don't have any because we have canvassed this matter with the department.

Mr DOUMA - Is the money a problem in that situation?

CHAIR - I think that \$50 000 was the extra cost for extra excavation to provide an appropriate sight distance for right-turning traffic out of north Rulla Road. We could make a value judgment as to whether money is a problem or not. I would suggest to you that it is not because we are talking about \$50 000 and it is not a substantial amount.

Mr DOUMA - A little further up, in section 1, there were a few farmers, and there was no underpass in the program of the intersection, but the underpass was put in later. In the council chamber there was confusion about this. For a lot of people the cul-de-sac is also causing confusion. The council changed it early this year and then on 28 July changed it again. Is it possible that the engineering people can make something of this? Could you upgrade the road over Rulla Creek to make it safe? The machines are there, that is not a problem. If it is a money problem I cannot fight it - I have no money.

Ms O'BYRNE - Mrs Moles said she turned left out of that intersection roughly three times a week. Could you, Mr Douma, tell me how many times you would turn left out of that intersection?

Mr DOUMA - Every day. And my wife would too.

Ms O'BYRNE - I just wanted to get some idea of the usage.

Mr DOUMA - My wife gets very nervous about it. I have been driving 38 years and I have been turning to the left and the right -

Ms O'BYRNE - Do you regularly turn right out of that intersection?

Mr DOUMA - Sometimes; not all the time. Once we get over to Devils Elbow Road out west, we can take a short cut. I bought a place over there and had an accident there. I was nearly killed there by a tractor with metal forks on the front. That was so serious I have never taken that route since. There are farmers' trucks and tractors using that road and it is not wide enough.

Mrs MOLES - There was just one rather important thing that I forgot to mention. Traffic travelling west and wishing to access Devils Elbow Road East have to turn in the face of two lanes of overtaking traffic. There is nowhere to wait and no designated slipway.

CHAIR - Mr Douma made that point as well. That is the issue that I want to come to now with Brian and Hein.

Mr DOUMA - There is just one question I want to ask. Can the committee override the council?

CHAIR - Do you mean this committee?

Mr DOUMA - Yes.

CHAIR - No. It is a council road; it is a negotiation between the council and the State. I presume that appeals against the council decision are to the Magistrates Court, so that is the process. This committee has jurisdiction to consider this project or any other, and we can only approve the project, as submitted to us, or reject it. You mentioned the underpass at an earlier section of the highway. We put the proposition to the representatives of the Government and the designers that an underpass was a reasonable thing for them to consider. We couldn't force them to install the underpass. They obviously understood that it was a reasonable proposition and went ahead with it.

Mr DOUMA - The main problem is that I have to give way to all the oncoming traffic and if I turn east into Devil's Elbow Road it is dangerous. If the committee suggests that the council makes a change there, can the council still reject that suggestion?

CHAIR - Yes. It is a council decision as to whether they agree to the department's proposal to dead-end North Rulla Road. That is a council decision entirely. This committee has no jurisdiction over what the council might decide.

Ms O'BYRNE - This committee can tick off whether or not the funds will be made available for the road, and I imagine the council is paying attention to that.

CHAIR - As Ms O'Byrne said, the council might well be waiting to see. I do not know whether either Bryan or Hein can shed any light on the council's position at the moment as to where they are at with their deliberation.

Mr POORTENAAR - I understand they are having a meeting at which they will consider it - I am not sure whether they have had it yet. If someone appealed - and I imagine Jack and Mollie would - then it would go to the magistrate who would make the final decision.

Ms O'BYRNE - The point is that this is not the only avenue for you to raise an objection.

Mr DOUMA - I have tried to get the committee to see the point as to how the money can be spent. If you are driving along the Devils Elbow Road and you come face to face with a truck, you cannot pass. Somebody has to reverse back to the top of the hill, and trucks cannot reverse to the top of the hill in that road. People have to give way to big trucks on a slippery road. Once a year the council grades the road to remove the bumps and potholes. Is it cheaper for the Government to close the road down and the council have no money to upgrade the road. That was what the council told me. The council have not really improved the road in 38 years. There have been a few accidents on the Devils Elbow Road - a few cars have rolled over. If I come down the hill and a truck comes up, I go out on the north side. If someone else - a neighbour - comes down the hill and I am going up, I have to go to the left and there are big potholes there. I have to go back up to the top on the east end and wait for the trucks; in doing so on one occasion it buckled my new car. The insurance won't pay that; I have to try the council. The council won't pay it. The money is there to improve the road and I am sure the engineers could do something about it. If I have to drive to the west and go out or go in it means I have to drive an extra five kilometres.

CHAIR - So you are saying that if you have to use Devils Elbow Road West, you have to travel an extra five kilometres, when that stretch of road is only 800 metres?

Mr DOUMA - Yes. Five kilometres to turn around.

Mr POORTENAAR - That is if he goes west. If he goes east then -

CHAIR - I think the points have been well made. I think every committee member understands your plight. We will proceed with further questions to the proponents of the project and my question to either Brian or Hein is what is the difference in closing Devils Elbow Road East as opposed to closing Rulla Road North? You heard both of these witnesses mention that at Devils Elbow Road East to turn right, if you are heading towards Smithton, you are crossing a double lane of traffic, whereas at Rulla Road North, you are crossing one lane of traffic. If we are rationalising accesses, can't we make Rulla Road North sufficiently safe and close Devils Elbow Road.

Mr POORTENAAR - Devils Elbow Road East accesses the Nichols' farm, so they would have to go the long way to access their farm. We have already upgraded it. They looked

at the three junctions and decided they couldn't close the west one or the east one, so this was the only one left.

Ms O'BYRNE - They being?

Mr POORTENAAR - The project sponsor, who is the transport infrastructure manager, and the chief traffic engineer.

CHAIR - You have indicated that you have just upgraded the east access and so therefore it cannot be closed. But was that considered as part of the whole package with regard to Rulla Road North, or are we just looking at Rulla Road North now in isolation.

Mr POORTENAAR - I understand they did look at closing two junctions and leaving just one open, and they decided that they needed to leave the easternmost and westernmost ones open because it would be further for someone to go right round.

CHAIR - You have heard Mr Douma mention about his extra travel. We appreciate that. Some judgments have been made there.

Mr DOUMA - That was that project from the improvement fund - Sisters Hills - in 2003. I wrote a letter about this in which I said, 'Don't close the northern end of the Rulla Road.' I never had an answer on that. Why didn't they interview the people first before they made decisions? In 2003 I saw the council straight away and let them know my objections to it. I asked them why they don't close the intersection on the east and keep that open. Nichols bought that property about two years back and he had the most machinery and big trucks driving down the hill, and there seems to be some trouble with that. For 38 years I have been complaining to the council and the council say to wait a bit because they have no money for it. If Brian Williams and Hein Poortenaar made a decision to close the road, I have to take that east end to get out - that is my route.

Mr HARRISS - We understand your plight.

Mr DOUMA - The rain washes the gravel away. Most of the gravel is lying in the neighbour's paddock, not on the road. If the road gets potholes it is no good for my car.

Mr HARRISS - We understand that, but you are going over the same issues that you raised earlier.

Mr DOUMA - I asked Brian Williams why they cannot make it wider over Rulla Creek. There are only two lanes there. He said it was to improve and straighten the overtaking lanes. However, the neighbouring land, Mollie's land, has some trees so that, if I come out from the south, I cannot see the oncoming traffic. There is a lot of work to be done there to take the trees down. The sections should be made safer from sight point to sight point. People still have to travel over that bit of road.

Mr HARRISS - Do Brian and Hein understand what Mr Douma is saying about sight distances and attempting to make this section of the project safer?

Mr WILLIAMS - I think so. I think what we have designed meets the line-of-sight guidelines.

Mr HARRISS - Can you indicate on the map the section to which Mr Douma refers?

Mr WILLIAMS - Right at the beginning of the job, close to Rulla Road, and to the left of that on the plan. There are trees in there that restrict sight. I think we noticed them this morning when we were looking towards the newly constructed works. However, we have adequate sight distances. You could always make the sight distance better by removing more trees, so it's a balance between impact on the environment and the other objectives of the project.

Mr HARRISS - If the project proceeds with the closure of Rulla Road north -

Mr WILLIAMS - We would want to have another look at those trees and at how many we might have to take out.

Mr DOUMA - That is what we talked about. I know how dangerous trucks can be. If I am driving downhill from the east or west, when I came across the sign that is 300 metres from the bypass lane, the vehicles speed up behind us. Mr Poortenaar has had that experience; do you remember it?

Mr HARRISS - I must remind you, Mr Douma, that only the committee may ask questions of any witness. We may not have questions from a witness to other witnesses. We clearly understand your position concerning Rulla Road north and the sight distances to which you refer. It does not matter, within our terms of reference, whether Mr Poortenaar can remember a particular instance. These gentlemen are aware of their obligations to design the road in accordance with Australian standards for safety provision. You have heard Mr Williams say that the proposal before this committee meets the Australian standard. However, he understands there may be a need to consider the removal of additional trees. Nonetheless, what is before us meets the Australian standard.

Mr DOUMA - That is fair enough; I was only giving an example.

Mr HARRISS - I understand.

Mr DOUMA - It was just an example of what I had seen but you have not seen. I did not mean to break the rules. I was just making clear to the committee something that might make the project safer, to please leave the north end open. It would be a lot safer for a lot of people.

Mr HARRISS - I understand that and we appreciate your taking the time to make your representation to us.

Mrs MOLES - If two people decided that Rulla Road north was the one to go, how many people will decide whether the council passes the project? Will it be the councillors or the council manager?

Mr HARRISS - We don't know precisely, but it will be the councillors who make the decision. You might want to lobby them about opposition to the closure.

Ms O'BYRNE - They would receive a recommendation from council officers, but council itself would make the determination.

Mr DOUMA - That is just my point. We have a community that is standing behind what is right for the people. If there are objections from the council about closing the road, then that expresses the will of the people, but if council is against the wishes of the people then we don't have a leg to stand on.

Mr HARRISS - Yes, and I know you understand, from what you said previously, that we cannot influence that. You need to make your representation to council and to continue to lobby them while they are considering whether the road should be closed or left open.

Mr DOUMA - If it closes I hope they improve the Devils Elbow Road. Don't be hasty; read what is in the letters.

Mrs MOLES - Thank you very much for coming and for your patience with our concerns.

Mr HARRISS - Not at all; it's the least we can do. Thank you.

Mr BEST - Hein and Brian, I realise it was impossible to look at the full issue of Devil's Elbow Road given that you have had to do this in stages, but it's a shame, in hindsight, that the full picture was not provided. We might then have known that closure of Rulla Road was suggested and that the two ends of Devils Elbow Road were proposed as service roads for people living in that section. I think it is a shame that the project was split up in the way it has been, otherwise this might have been addressed differently.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

