



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

Lyell Highway – Queenstown to Strahan Safety Upgrade Project

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

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Legislative Council

Ms Rattray (Deputy Chair)
Mr Valentine (Chair)

House of Assembly

Ms Butler
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1 INTRODUCTION

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

Lyell Highway – Queenstown to Strahan Safety Upgrade Project

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This reference recommended the Committee approve upgrade works to improve driver safety on the Lyell Highway between Queenstown and Strahan.
- 2.2 The Lyell Highway is the most direct route between Queenstown and Strahan and forms part of Tasmania's Western Wilds tourism journey. The Highway traverses difficult terrain, winding around the bases of steep hills and ascending and descending into creeks and small rivers, which leads to variable pavement width across its length. It has many curves, which do not meet today's current safety standards and guidelines, with many curves characterised by tight radii, resulting in low vehicle operating speeds. These factors create ongoing safety issues and have adverse impacts on travel time reliability.
- 2.3 The Department of State Growth (the Department) has undertaken extensive consultation with the West Coast Council, the Tasmanian Transport Association and freight operators. This has provided a better understanding of the safety concerns and helped to inform the scope of the proposed works.
- 2.4 Through this consultation, the Department became aware that some residents and commercial operators choose to travel the additional 35km from Queenstown via the Zeehan Highway to Zeehan and then Henty Main Road to Strahan, and vice versa to avoid driving this section of the Lyell Highway, due to the safety concerns and travel time reliability issues.
- 2.5 As a result, the scope of the Lyell Highway–Queenstown to Strahan Safety Upgrade Project involves upgrading nearly 40 kilometres of the Lyell Highway, from the Queen River Bridge in Queenstown, to the Harvey Street Junction in Strahan. The works aim to improve driver safety and travel time reliability by providing slow vehicle stopping bays, passing lanes, and where possible, improving the current road alignment by widening highway curves and improving pavement strength.
- 2.7 The works will be undertaken in two stages. The design for Stage 1 has been completed and construction is expected to commence in Spring/ Summer 2021. The Stage 1 works include:
- construction of passing lanes, with two located on the westbound carriageway and two on the eastbound carriageway;
 - construction of stopping bays, with three located on the westbound carriageway and five on the eastbound carriageway, with appropriately placed signage prior to these facilities to alert drivers of their presence and to encourage usage by drivers.

2.7 Stage 2 is currently in the concept design stage, and includes:

- targeted pavement strengthening and widening;
- a slow turn out lane between Queenstown and the Zeehan Highway junction; and;
- alignment and delineation improvements in the section of road between Zeehan Highway Junction to Strahan.

Alignment and pavement works will be prioritised where there are significant drops in the operating speed at a curve.

2.8 The proposed works will improve safety by:

- providing passing lanes to create opportunities for faster moving traffic to overtake slower moving vehicles;
- providing stopping bays to allow vehicles to safely pull off the highway and stop;
- improving road alignments, by widening curves where there are significant drops in the operating speed at a curve;
- improving pavement strength;
- reducing edge break; and
- incorporating delineation improvements, to assist drivers to better judge their position on the road.

2.9 In addition to providing a safer travel environment for drivers, the works will also improve travel time reliability. Together, these measures will deliver an improved overall driving experience for local road users, freight operators and tourists.

3 PROJECT COSTS

- 3.1 Pursuant to the Message from Her Excellency the Governor-in-Council, the estimated cost of the work is \$18.75 million.

The following table details the p50 and p90 cost estimates for the project:

	P50 (\$m AUD)	P90 (\$m AUD)
Base Cost Estimate	12.983486	12.983486
Contingency	2.959414	4.433114
Total Project Cost Estimate	15.942900	17.416600
Escalation	1.143336	1.249021
Total Outturn Cost Estimate	17.086236	18.665621

4 EVIDENCE

4.1 The Committee commenced its inquiry at the West Coast Council Chambers on Monday, 9 August last with a PowerPoint presentation on the proposed works. The Committee then commenced the formal hearing, whereupon the following witnesses appeared, made the Statutory Declaration and were examined by the Committee in public:

- Robyn Hawkins, Project Manager, Department of State Growth; and
- Sven Meyer, Project Management Team Leader, Department of State Growth.

The following Committee Members were present:

- Hon Rob Valentine MLC (Chair);
- Hon Tania Rattray MLC (Deputy-Chair);
- Mr Felix Ellis MP; and
- Mr John Tucker MP.

Overview

4.2 Ms Hawkins provided an overview of the proposed works:

Ms HAWKINS - Today we are seeking approval for the Lyell Highway Safety Upgrade Queenstown to Strahan. The project involves upgrades on sections of nearly 40 kilometres of the Lyell Highway between the Queen River Bridge in Queenstown to Harvey Street junction in Strahan. The Lyell Highway Safety Upgrade is a road upgrade aimed at improving road safety for all road users and improving travel time reliability.

The section of the Lyell Highway is located within the Cradle Coast region. The Cradle Coast Integrated Transport Strategy was jointly developed by the Tasmanian Government and the Cradle Coast Authority in 2006 to provide a coordinated and strategic framework to address transport issues over the coming 20 years. The strategy identifies the section of the Lyell Highway to be a strategic road, providing access to the touring and nature-based tourism markets.

At the 2021 state election the state Government announced the west coast commitment that included joint Australian and Tasmanian government funding totalling \$18.75 million for upgrades to the Lyell Highway between Queenstown and Strahan. The funding commitment is for upgrades including stopping bays for slow-moving traffic, passing lanes and environment improvements.

The project involves two sections of the Lyell Highway, one being the Queenstown to Zeehan Highway junction, which is a category 3 road. This section of road from Queenstown to the Zeehan Highway junction is used by a range of high-productivity vehicles. The approximate volume is just under 1000 vehicles per day with approximately 10.7 per cent heavy vehicles.

The second section of the Lyell Highway is between the Zeehan Highway junction to Strahan. This is a category 4 road. For this section of the Lyell Highway from the Zeehan Highway junction to Strahan access is limited to general access vehicles. The traffic volume is approximately 423 vehicles per day with 8.5 per cent heavy vehicles. It should be noted that this section has a summer seasonal traffic volume variation that sees approximately 661 vehicles per day during January.

The recorded crash history for the Lyell Highway between Queenstown and Strahan has been obtained for the last 10 years as part of the project development and investigation and is as

follows. There have been 74 vehicle crashes over the past 10 years. A high number of these crashes, approximately 29 per cent, have occurred during the peak tourism season of January and February during daylight hours, suggesting that unfamiliar drivers are having difficulty navigating the road. The majority of crashes, 77 per cent, are single vehicle run off curve or straight crashes.

The proposed improvements for the project include passing lanes and stopping bays and a slow turnout lane on the section of the Lyell Highway between Queenstown to the Zeehan Highway junction. Alignment and delineation improvements will also be provided on the section between the Zeehan Highway junction to Strahan. The alignment and delineation improvements will be prioritised where there are significant drops in operating speed at the curves.

The proposed improvements will deliver the following benefits: improved safety through improved curve delineation and targeted seal widening; improved travel time savings and vehicle operating costs; improved visitor travelling experience; and improved transport system resilience.

In terms of cost, the project is forecast to cost \$18.75 million at P90 value for the corridor. Costs for these proposed improvements on estimates are consistent with similar recently completed projects. Once delivered, road users will see improved road safety and more reliable travel times.

The proposed improvements are as follows. For stage 1, passing lanes, westbound carriageway two locations, eastbound carriageway two locations; stopping bays, westbound carriageway three locations, eastbound carriageway five locations. Signage will also be provided as part of stage 1.

In parallel with construction of stage 1, the design for stage 2 works will be finalised and then proceed to construction. The proposed works for stage 2 comprise a slow turnout lane on the section of the Lyell Highway between Queenstown to the Zeehan Highway junction and alignment and delineation improvement on the section of the road between the Zeehan Highway junction and Strahan. The work will be prioritised where there are significant drops in operating speed at corners. All works will be completed by mid-2023.

Overall, we submit that the project is an important safety upgrade. The upgrades will provide passing and stopping bays in both directions and improve safety and efficiency. A second stage of works will include alignment improvements on curves and a slow vehicle turnout lane on the section between Queenstown and the Zeehan Highway junction.

We have worked with stakeholders and will continue to do so to reduce convenience impacts of the project, both during and after construction.

Stopping Bays

4.3 The Committee noted that one of the key elements of the project was the provision of multiple stopping bays for slow moving traffic, including tourists and heavy vehicles, to pull over and stop at regular intervals along the section of the Lyell Highway between the Zeehan Highway junction and Strahan. The Committee questioned the witnesses on how the number and location of the stopping bays had been determined:

Ms RATTRAY - I think Robyn gave a really good explanation when we looked at the video this morning about why there are only three locations in the west-bound carriage way, and five on the east-bound. I think that would be useful to have set on the record.

Ms HAWKINS - Certainly. So, the positioning of the stopping bays looked at locations where they would benefit motorists on the road, so trying to have them at regular intervals. But one constraint that is very present with this road is the actual opportunity to provide them. For this reason, we were trying to match the numbers in both directions but, unfortunately, there

was not always a location for them to be provided. Also, it needed to consider safe sight distance for people to get in and out of the stopping bays, which was another constraint on the positioning, as well as the terrain.

Ms RATTRAY - And we noticed on our drive this morning for the length that we actually covered, the Chair and I, that there are quite a few informal areas that people must already use. How many of those will be formalised and how many will become redundant or perhaps, remain informal?

Ms HAWKINS - So, we will not be looking to take away any of the current informal. Essentially, from the video presentation this morning, you would have seen that the majority of the locations that we are looking at are currently gravelled areas where you can see that people are using them now. So they will be essentially formalised, with a full sealed width, so people can safely pull in and pull out.

CHAIR - So, in a sense, this would be the minimum of formal and there will still be some informal opportunities?

Ms HAWKINS - Yes.

CHAIR - Were the locations mainly determined by the terrain, or settlement locations, or businesses? But I don't think there are too many houses between Queenstown and Strahan.... So, I'd suggest I've probably answered my own question, saying that it's mainly terrain.

Ms HAWKINS - Yes, that's correct.... and trying to get them at regular intervals as well.

- 4.4 The Committee recognised that many drivers on the Lyell Highway may not be familiar with the road and travel conditions. The Committee sought an assurance that there would be the sufficient signage to provide advance warning to motorists of upcoming stopping and passing opportunities:

CHAIR - And signage? That was brought up by one of the members. How much signage is there going to be to inform people that these opportunities will be available? Because obviously people who have not driven the road before won't know.

Ms HAWKINS - The stopping bays will include sufficient advanced warning signage to notify people that they are available and that they are coming up, so that they can safely pull in and out of them. And that will be part of the construction project.

Improvements in Travel Time

- 4.5 One of the benefits identified for this project is an improvement in travel time reliability. The Committee sought to understand whether this would translate to either actual travel time savings or a better driving experience:

Ms RATTRAY - you put that this project will improve travel time, reliability for local traffic: Is it likely to take any time off the travel time?

Ms HAWKINS - I guess what is meant by that statement is that if you are thinking about having the opportunity to pass slower-moving vehicles or having slower-moving vehicles being able to pull off into stopping bays, I guess that is where the travel time reliability will come into it. Because at the moment it is quite challenging to find locations to actually pull off, as you would have witnessed if you have driven the road.

Ms RATTRAY - I doubt that it would be significant time-saving, though. Just a more, I guess, a better driving experience.

Ms HAWKINS - I guess, it just is dependent on who you happen to be following as you are driving the road. But going back to that statement about members of the community choosing to travel the alternate direction, the feedback we received was obviously about

potentially visitors to the area that are not familiar with the road and travelling at much slower speeds.

Mr ELLIS - Chair, from personal experience, being stuck behind a caravan at the wrong corner on that drive can take 20 per cent longer, or even upwards of that. And particularly being an important commuter road, industry road, that mix with tourism vehicles. This is an important way that they'll be able to co-exist, in a more safe and efficient way.

Ms HAWKINS - Yes. I think that the stopping ways and the passing lanes are not just for tourists, they're potentially for anybody using the road.

- 4.6 The Committee understood that many vehicles took an alternative route between Strahan and Queenstown which was significantly longer, which demonstrated the need for upgrade works on this section of the Lyell Highway:

CHAIR - Just in terms of improved transport resilience and system resilience, what are the traffic loads like with the other road from Strahan to Zeehan, for instance? Did you do a comparison with that? people travel 35 kilometres to use this other road because they simply do not want to negotiate what is presently there between Queenstown and Strahan.

Mr MEYER - When we talk about using the other road, a lot of that is for the freight movement because they generally do not like going up and down steep inclines. Henty Main Road and Murchison is a bit closer and better in grade.

Measures to Improve Safety for Motor Cyclists

- 4.7 The Committee noted that the Lyell highway was very windy, with significant hazards. Recognising the vulnerability of motor cyclists to hazards and the road environment, the Committee sought to understand what measures may be taken to improve safety outcomes for motorcyclists:

CHAIR - Are you employing Armco railings in any of this upgrade?

Ms HAWKINS - Certainly where they are required to protect people in drop-offs or hazards along the road that's been part of the design development.

CHAIR - The reason I ask is because it's a windy road. I don't know whether you have any figures on the number of motorbikes that might use that road? Would you have that detail?

Ms HAWKINS - That's something I'd have to take on notice.

CHAIR - That's okay. I have to say it's not always the motorcyclist's fault, it might be that the driver of a vehicle hasn't seen the motorcyclist. For whatever reason they come to grief, if it's Armco railing then the lower rail can be put in place on the Armco railing to save a lot of damage to a rider.

Ms HAWKINS - Yes, that's right.

CHAIR - Is there consideration of that in your design?

Ms HAWKINS - Yes, the rub rails are certainly provided on roads where it's deemed to have motorcycle traffic.

CHAIR - Yes. So, will that be the case here?

Ms HAWKINS - We'll be looking at it.

Ms RATTRAY - So, supplementary to that, will you be looking at it after you have a look at the number of motorcycle movements or get some feedback from the motorcycle association on the level of usage of that road before you decide? When and how will the decision be made to put that... .. additional safety measure?

Ms HAWKINS - Yes. So, we'll be talking with our Departmental colleagues to determine where the higher priority motorcycle routes are and where the rub rails are provided.

CHAIR - In terms of expense, it's not overly pricey to put an extra rail in, I would think. I might be talking out of turn there, but it could have a higher benefit in terms of someone's life.

Mr MEYER - It's not a large increase in price when you're looking from the starting point of construction.

Mr ELLIS - It might be worth noting in the crash history section it says, 'Significant number of crashes - 19 per cent - involved motorcyclists, indicating it's a motorcyclist touring route; 14 crashes involving motorcyclists, 12 are considered an off-bend type crash, signifying a lack of control; only one involved a second vehicle.' So, I suppose we are looking at quite a few incidents where people just skidded off and -

Mr MEYER - Yes.

Ms RATTRAY - Yes. I think it's a really important point that you raised, Chair, and I'd like to see that specifically addressed by the Department.

CHAIR - It would be good to think that maybe the Motorcycle Riders Association could be consulted on what their impressions are of these sorts of upgrades.

Mr MEYER - Yes.

Ms RATTRAY - Well, there is some crash data but also the areas where the crashes were on that little map, so we would be able to find out... .. where the hot spots are.

Mr MEYER - So, that's something we'll be looking at as part of the stage 2, the design development and further consultation.

Ensuring the Quality of Construction Work in the Challenging West Coast Environment

4.8 The Committee recognised the terrain and local weather conditions provided a very challenging environment in which to undertake road works. The Committee sought to understand what measures the Department could implement to ensure the quality of work in such a challenging environment:

CHAIR - So, under 2.1 Long-term Strategic Approach for Upgrading the Section, are you confident, given the area it is in and the contrary weather we get, that the contractors will have enough experience in laying pavement on the west coast under these sorts of conditions? As we raise from time to time, the integrity of the pavement sometimes comes up wanting, I think is probably the best way to put it.

... .. And it may be that the contractors simply haven't had enough experience in these sorts of locations. They might be companies from the mainland. They just might not understand or be used to the colder weather. Are you confident that you're going to get people that are well and truly experienced in this sort of terrain and weather conditions?

Ms HAWKIN - I think that the Department is fully aware that constructing roads on the west coast can be challenging, given the weather and the shortness of the construction season. So, as part of the tendering process that we go through to engage a contractor, we require a level of pre-qualification which demonstrates that the contractor is sufficiently experienced and able to undertake work of this nature. The level of pre-qualification is determined for each project. To back that up we also have specifications in place which control and mitigate risk in the way the project progresses and ultimately succeeds.

Mr MEYER - Just on the construction timeframe for the west coast, we try to get things out around June, so we can award them around August-September and have people on the ground around September-October. Hopefully they can do the majority of the clearing works and the pavements before Christmas. January-February is the peak sealing time. Towards the end of March is probably when they would stop doing any of the sealing works. If they haven't

managed to seal all the prepared areas, that is when you might have to halt works for winter and come back again in November-December the following year. That is one of the reasons why we have got the two stages of works.

Mr ELLIS - ... On the section between Tullah and Pieman Road on the Murchison Highway, are you aware of the long delays and experience of that section of road? What guarantee do we have that this is not going to happen again on this road?

Mr MEYER - All we can do is plan as well as we can to get the contractors on site. Sometimes weather conditions do not go in our favour. I think last year it was quite wet in the January period, which delayed some works. We are open to seasonal issues like that.

Ms RATTRAY - So that is a no guarantee.

Mr MEYER - It is planning for the weather as much as we can.

Mr ELLIS - Have there been new controls put in place after that experience? It seemed particularly frustrating for a lot of the west coast road users?

Mr MEYER - Well, it depends on the sections of road, but sometimes they do some sealing works which we then have to remove and repair the following year in summer so it is not an extended gravel surface you are driving on through winter.

CHAIR - Things like tarmac that is very temperature sensitive and distance from where it is heated to where it gets finally laid, are there any particular arrangements that are made for that or do you leave it up to the contractor? Do you inspect their processes and procedures, because I think that is where a lot of this seems to come unstuck? The tarmac when it's laid and the aggregate that then goes on top of it just does not seem to embed properly. You get it stripping and those sorts of things.

Mr MEYER - That is left up to the contractor, but there are specifications and testing procedures that they have to adhere to which are quality checked by our project managers and superintendents.

CHAIR - So they go around and regularly check it?

Mr MEYER - Yes. There are temperature records and a whole bunch of test certificates that they have to record and then submit.

CHAIR - So, do the contractors have to provide their own bitumen plants or how does that work these days?

Mr MEYER - That is up to the contractor.

Mr ELLIS - ... What is the warranty period on a road on the west coast?

Mr MEYER - So normal warranty is two years, three years for a bridge, one year for shoulder sealing.

Ms HAWKINS - And I guess, just going back to your question about success of the project, as Sven was talking about ... when we tried to get these projects out to tender so that they have sufficient time to be able to get going when the weather is good, we are on track with this project. It is currently out to tendering. We will be in a position, hopefully, to award, so that they can get started when the weather is good.

Project Costs

4.9 The Committee recognised that the challenging environment and remote location would filter through as increased tender prices compared to works in other, less challenging, locations. Recognising these constraints, the Committee was keen to understand if the Department was confident the proposed works could be completed within the allocated budget, without compromising the desired safety outcomes of the project:

Ms RATTRAY - I am just having a look at - obviously you've looked at the road significantly in regard to the base cost estimate here. Do you realistically believe that the \$18.75 million that's been allocated will enable the works to be done as the concept plans that you've put in place? To me it doesn't seem like a lot of money in this scheme of things.

Ms HAWKINS - Yes, so I guess as you've commented, the road terrain is quite challenging but the benefit of having two packages, two stages of works, is that we will be able to get accurate project costing from the first tender and we will be able to adjust the scope as we need to, to make sure that we are sticking within our budget. But I believe that the proposed works that we're looking to deliver will certainly provide benefit for anybody using this road in the community.

Ms RATTRAY - And would it be fair to say that the sheer remoteness of this part of Tasmania for a workforce would mean that it would cost more to do the job because people will have to live away from home, if you like, and that comes at a significant cost for companies undertaking these works? Is that factored into the costs here at all?

Ms HAWKINS - In terms of the project costing, the Department has the ability to look at recently completed projects in the same location to be able to provide more accurate estimates. So, I guess, in terms of their workforce, that is a contractor cost but the Department does have the ability to look at recently completed projects and to have an understanding of what these projects are going to cost.

Ms RATTRAY - So, that is a fair comment, that there will need to be people working - and you're not going to drive in and out of this area, I expect, on a daily basis back to Burnie or back to Hobart, or wherever they might come from. They won't necessarily all live in this region.

Ms HAWKINS - I think that's up to the contractor, whoever the successful contractor is, and where their workforce is based. I probably can't comment on that other than that it's probably a reasonable statement but we won't know until we actually engage a contractor.

Mr MEYER - we've been doing upgrade works on the Murchison Highway for the last six years or so and I guess what we find there is because of the shorter season, prices are probably a little bit higher than you'd find nearer cities and towns.

Traffic Management During Construction

4.10 The Committee recognised that the nature of the road would mean that traffic management would be very important during construction. The Committee questioned the witnesses further on this, and how driver frustration could be minimised:

CHAIR - With stage 3, 'Unsafe or difficult management of traffic during construction due to the narrow and winding nature of the road', one of your mitigating strategies is contractor CEMP. I'm not quite sure what that stands for? To clearly identify a process of traffic management for superintendent acceptance as a hold point.

Ms HAWKINS - So, it's just the construction environment management plan. It documents things like traffic management and the arrangements that are in place.

CHAIR - Yes. We brought this up the time before last, regarding after-hours signage and speed limits. Often there's a 40 kilometres per hour speed limit in place, slowing traffic down for no reason, because there aren't any workers there. Can you tell us how you might be communicating that to your contractors so that they cover those signs up or put a higher speed when there aren't any workers around?

Ms HAWKINS - From the Department's point of view, we're very conscious that we want to have traffic management in place that people understand and see that there is a reason - for their safety and obviously for workforce safety. For that reason, we have traffic management audits that happen through a construction project. Regarding speed limits, unfortunately

sometimes it isn't about workers being there. It might be about a hazard, such as a drop... which people might not be able to readily see which can be an issue.

CHAIR - As we said before, when it's on a major highway and you're going from Hobart to Launceston, you're down to 40 and it's 10 p.m. and there's not a person in sight.

Ms HAWKINS - I agree, but it's in everybody's interest to make sure that the traffic management is well understood and in place.

Potential to Close the Highway to Facilitate Quicker Construction

4.11 Recognising both the alternative route that many drivers already use, and heightened driver frustration due to travel delays during construction, the Committee sought to understand if it was possible to close the Highway to enable a shorter construction period:

Ms RATTRAY - ... I have a question in regard to the possibility of closing the road. Given there is an alternative route, in my view it would probably make a lot of sense to close the road if you are going to do a stretch that is going to cause some significant delays, get it done and then open it up and get the traffic back on it in a more timely manner.

Ms HAWKINS - Our discussion with the Tasmanian Transport Association was that they are not in favour of having the road closed so we are not looking at that as part of the construction at this stage.

Mr ELLIS - Because the alternative route is about 20 minutes longer?

Ms RATTRAY - That was 35 kilometres longer?

Mr ELLIS - ... It's about a kilometre a minute.

Ms RATTRAY - ... But I don't mean for the whole time, I mean for a week, where you go in and have a red-hot go at getting that particular stretch done, and then opening it up again. I would suggest that that is probably going to make some very good sense for the overall aspect. A week of inconvenience to -

Ms HAWKINS - I guess we go back to talking to our stakeholders with the feedback that we receive, so we will be looking to manage delays as part of the tender documents and the contract that will be formed with the contractor and it would be part of their responsibility to be able to manage traffic through the worksite and keep the delays to an acceptable level.

Ms RATTRAY - I thought that would have been a very sensible approach....

Consultation

4.12 The Committee understood that significant consultation was undertaken with the West Coast Council and transport operators in determining the scope of the works. The Committee sought to understand what opportunities had been provided to the local community to be informed and have input on the proposed works:

CHAIR - ... You talk about how the Department of State Growth consulted with the West Coast Council, Tasmanian Transport Association, transport operators through the consultations. It is understood that due to the safety concerns of operators travelling on this section of highway and travel time reliability, some residents and commercial operators choose to travel the additional 35 km from Queenstown to Zeehan to use the other road. I am just wondering how much opportunity general residents had to be able to have a bit of an input to this? I know you have gone to the transport associations and the like. Must appreciate that it was in certain libraries, but just wondering if you could just cover off on that consultation?

Ms HAWKINS - Sure. The project was open for public display between July 9 and July 30 and we focused on having the information available at a number of locations in Queenstown and Strahan, and at Derwent Bridge. The information was also on the Department's website and continues to be there as well.

CHAIR - What about Derwent Bridge? Whereabouts in Derwent Bridge?

Ms HAWKINS - Just at the store.

CHAIR - At the store, okay.

Ms HAWKINS - And also on the notice board there.

CHAIR - So, to follow up on that, with that consultation, are there any concerns that were expressed that you can't mitigate?

Ms HAWKINS - I don't believe so, I believe the general feedback that we received was overall positive for the project and welcomed.

- 4.13 The Committee also sought an assurance that the matters raised by the West Coast Council and transport representatives had been addressed in the scope of the proposed works:

Ms RATTRAY - I was going to ask about the additional requests ... in the project by council or the transport association. You've talked about continuing engagement during the development phase. Is there something that either one of these two bodies have asked for that may be part of stage 2?

Ms HAWKINS - Not explicitly. As I said, we've taken on early engagement with both of these stakeholders. We're pretty confident that we are aligned with what we are delivering.

Does the Project Meet Identified Needs and Provide Value for Money?

- 4.14 In assessing any proposed public work, the Committee seeks assurance that each project is a good use of public funds and meets identified needs. The Committee questioned the witnesses who confirmed that the project did meet these criteria and provided value for money in using public funds:

CHAIR - ... We have a series of questions that we like to ask as we finish our scrutiny of these projects and they're pretty fundamental but it's important that we get an understanding of them. Do the proposed works meet and identify need or needs or solve a recognised problem?

Ms HAWKINS - Yes.

Mr MEYER - Yes.

CHAIR - Are the proposed works the best solution to meet identified needs or solve a recognised problem within the allocated budget?

Ms HAWKINS - Yes.

Mr MEYER - Yes.

CHAIR - Are the proposed works fit for purpose?

Ms HAWKINS - Yes.

Mr MEYER - Yes.

CHAIR - Do the proposed works provide value for money?

Ms HAWKINS - Yes.

Mr MEYER - Yes.

CHAIR - Are the proposed works a good use of public funds?

Ms HAWKINS - Yes.

Mr MEYER - Yes.

Ms RATTRAY - Is there any gold-plating?

Mr MEYER - Well, we don't believe so.

Ms HAWKINS - The per kilometre costs are appropriate and in conclusion we believe that the project is a good use of taxpayers' money..

5 DOCUMENTS TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE

5.1 The following document was taken into evidence and considered by the Committee:

- *Lyell Highway Upgrade –Queenstown to Strahan*, Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, Department of State Growth, 23 July 2021.

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 The Committee is satisfied that the need for the proposed works has been established. Once completed, the works will deliver an improved overall driving experience for local road users, freight operators and tourists.
- 6.2 The proposed works will improve both the safety and efficiency of travel on the Lyell Highway between Queenstown and Strahan. This will be achieved by providing a number of safe passing and stopping opportunities, and by improvements to the alignment, delineation, width and strength of the pavement at curves that are difficult to negotiate and require a significant drop in vehicle operating speed.
- 6.3 Accordingly, the Committee recommends the Lyell Highway – Queenstown to Strahan Safety Upgrade Project, at an estimated cost of \$18.75 million, in accordance with the documentation submitted.

**Parliament House
Hobart
15 September 2021**

**Hon Rob Valentine MLC
Chair**