



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

Old Surrey Road/Massy-Greene Drive Upgrade

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

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Legislative Council

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House of Assembly

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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 -

Old Surrey Road - Massy-Greene Drive Upgrade

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This reference recommended the Committee approve works to upgrade Old Surrey Road, Massy-Greene Drive and Mount Street to improve freight transport productivity and road safety.
- 2.2 Old Surrey Road and Massy-Greene Drive form a strategic truck route linking Ridgley Highway with the Bass Highway in Burnie. Access from the Bass Highway links important mining and other activity on the west coast of Tasmania with the port of Burnie and the major highways linking to Devonport, Launceston, and Hobart.
- 2.3 In 2021 the Department of State Growth completed a Freight Efficiency Study. This study identified the need for investment in Old Surrey Road and Massy-Greene Drive to address both safety and efficiency concerns raised by heavy vehicle users, the road authority, local government, and businesses associated with heavy vehicle transport.
- 2.4 Subsequently, the Australian and Tasmanian governments have committed \$20m to deliver freight efficiency improvements via the Old Surrey Road/Massy-Greene Drive Upgrade. The works are to be funded under the Australian Government's Roads of Strategic Importance initiative (\$16m) and the State's Capital Investment Program (\$4m).
- 2.5 Sections of the truck route on Old Surrey Road and Massy-Greene Drive are local roads, owned by the Burnie City Council. To facilitate the proposed upgrades, a road swap has been negotiated. Ownership of the Burnie City Council-owned sections will be transferred to the Department of State Growth, so the entire truck route will be owned by the Department. In return, the Department will upgrade sections of Mount Street and transfer it to the Council.
- 2.6 The aim of the upgrade project is to:
 - deliver a package of works to improve the efficiency and safety of the Old Surrey Road and Massy-Greene Drive truck route.
 - reduce the regulatory burden on heavy vehicle operators by facilitating a road asset swap that ensures the truck route is managed by a single road authority.
 - design infrastructure that meets the needs of stakeholders and is safe, valued, and well utilised.
- 2.5 The proposed works will include the following upgrades:

- Prioritised works on Old Surrey Road and Massy-Greene Drive to better accommodate heavy vehicle traffic including:
 - widening of the Old Surrey Road/Massy-Greene Drive intersection;
 - widening of the Bass Highway/Massy-Greene Drive intersection including the right turn in from Bass Highway (west) and left turn out from Massy-Greene Drive;
 - bridge strengthening works in two locations on Massy-Greene Drive across rail corridors;
 - creation of a new heavy vehicle rest area on Massy-Greene Drive with facilities for drivers, to replace the current gravel area; and
 - barrier structure upgrades to meet standards for heavy vehicles.
- Upgrade to sections of Mount Street including:
 - upgrading the intersection of Mount Street and Thorne Street to a roundabout;
 - traffic lights and pedestrian crossings at the intersection of Mount Street and Roslyn Avenue
 - maintenance works on the retaining wall at the northern end, eastern (lower) side, of Mount Street.
- Other general maintenance and rehabilitation work such as installation of signage, barrier upgrades, and road pavement rehabilitation to improve safety and upgrade road standards to meet the requirements for heavy vehicle traffic.

2.6 The project is expected to deliver the following benefits:

- provision of a safe and efficient freight connection between the Bass and Ridgley Highways;
- increased road and bridge capacity leading to greater transport reliability;
- improvement in road safety for all road users (heavy and light vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians);
- increased future capacity at intersections allowing for future population and traffic growth;
- improved connectivity and safety for active transport users;
- simplified heavy vehicle access permits required for the truck route; and
- improved local traffic management along Mount Street.

3 PROJECT COSTS

- 3.1 Pursuant to the Message from Her Excellency the Governor-in-Council, the estimated cost of the work is \$20 million.

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

Item	P50 estimate	P90 estimate	Notes
Base Estimate	\$11.4m	\$11.4m	Works including investigations, design, community engagement, approvals, acquisition (including related compensation), project management and construction.
Contingency	\$3.4m	\$7.2m	Contingency 40% – 85% of base estimate. Refer below for discussion.
Escalation	\$1.14m	\$1.4m	Escalation 10% of base estimate. Refer below for discussion.
Total	\$15.94m	\$20m	

The Department's submission provided an explanation of the contingency and escalation allowances provided for in the cost estimates:

The contingency allowance provides for contingent events – that is events which may or may not occur. For this project, key contingent risk items include:

- *variation in scope with respect to active transport and retaining wall maintenance items as part of ongoing discussions with Burnie City Council;*
- *variation in scope with design and constructability issues, complex traffic management, and service relocations;*
- *acquisition and protracted property owner negotiations in respect to accommodation works;*
- *delays to approvals processes;*
- *tender rates are unexpectedly higher; and*
- *discovery of latent conditions, such as unexpected ground conditions.*

The escalation allowance is a provision in costs for changes in economic and market conditions over time. Estimates of escalation are not intended to be precise forecast of future prices, but are approximations intended to represent the average trends for a large group of projects in a broad region.

The escalation rate for projects which are part funded by the Australian Government is determined by the Australian Government and is included in the project cost estimates as part of funding submissions from the Department to the Australian Government.¹

¹ *Old Surrey Road and Massy-Greene Drive Upgrades-Public Works Committee Submission, Department of State Growth, page 10.*

4 EVIDENCE

- 4.1 The Committee commenced its inquiry on Wednesday, 20 September last with an inspection of the site of the proposed works. The Committee then returned to the Function Room, at the Cradle Coast Authority, whereupon the following witnesses appeared, made the Statutory Declaration and were examined by the Committee in public:-

Proponent:

- Simon Reading Project Manager, Programming & Delivery, State Roads Department of State Growth; and
- Vanessa King, Manager Programming and Approvals, Programming & Delivery, State Roads, Department of State Growth.

The following Committee Members were present:

- Mr Valentine (Chair);
- Ms Rattray (Deputy Chair); and
- Mr Wood.

Overview

- 4.2 Ms King and Mr Reading provided a comprehensive background and overview of the proposed works:

Ms KING - ... Today we are seeking consideration of the Old Surrey Road / Massy-Greene Drive upgrade project that's supported by a \$20 million commitment from the Australian and Tasmanian governments.

Tasmania has an integrated freight strategy which considers freight across the state, unsurprisingly, and the connections to interstate. One component of the road network which is addressed by that integrated freight strategy is the Burnie truck route, and that is the subject of the project we're putting up today. That Burnie truck route is part of the important connection between the west coast through to Burnie and then further from Burnie through other highways to Launceston and Hobart. The movement of freight between the north-west coast of Tasmania to other cities, or including all the way to Hobart, is really important in supporting the agricultural, forestry, mining and manufacturing industries in the state and, as I said, the Burnie truck road is an important part of that corridor.

In 2021 the department undertook a freight efficiency study for this corridor. Objectives of the study included identifying barriers and opportunities for freight productivity along the corridor and developing a list of upgrade options to improve freight productivity and safety.

The corridor we are talking about today is, in road names, a little complex to describe. It starts at the Bass Highway where a road called Massy-Greene Drive intersects with the Bass Highway. Massy-Greene Drive then continues south, there is a short section of Old Surrey Road which is included in that Burnie truck route, and at the southern end it connects to the Ridgley Highway. The project also is looking at works along Mount Street, which runs more or less parallel to Massy-Greene Drive. Some of the transport needs between those two roads cross-interact and we will explain that as we go through the presentation.

The freight efficiency study concluded that there were substantially two categories of need for improvement in this environment in this location. One was to improve the physical road

environment and another was to improve the governance of the road environment, which in this case means the road ownership and management. We will talk through both of those, starting with the physical stuff.

The work that we undertook through this freight efficiency study looked at a lot of the parameters of the road and how it works. We investigated traffic volumes and heavy vehicle travel times. The traffic volumes were annual and at peak hours particularly focused on the intersections. We looked at bridge capacity, some of that work outside the freight study but in parallel to it. We looked at the road geometry, both the horizontal curves and the vertical curves or grades, because some of it is pretty hilly through there. We looked at accesses along Massy-Greene Drive, safety, crash data, and considered pedestrian and cyclist movements as well as powered vehicle movements. We also considered future service needs, for example, introducing higher productivity freight vehicles and larger trucks.

... We looked at all these aspects of making sure it is a suitably efficient and safe road environment.

As part of that freight efficiency study, some early stakeholder engagement was undertaken, including an investment logic mapping workshop with Burnie City Council. There were some other attendees invited to that workshop who were not able to attend, but that workshop produced a list of issues which could basically be summarised as inconsistent and noncompliant safety barriers; faded, missing and incomplete line marking and signage; pavement cracking and deformation in some locations; non-standard and noncompliant pedestrian crossings; and passing opportunities for heavy vehicles.

They were the issues identified. The issues were reviewed against the objectives for the corridor and 18 proposed actions were recommended. There was work to prioritise those 18 actions.

We used a technique called the multiple criteria assessment, which involves scoring each of the proposed actions for alignment with the objectives: Would they contribute to achieving the objectives? Each of the actions was scored for achievability. What's the cost? What's the timing? How difficult would it be? Of this option, how good is the result and how hard is it to achieve that?

The team who worked on that included State Growth, Burnie City Council, National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, the Tasmanian Transport Association and Transport Tasmania. It was not just us. We were working with people who bring a great deal of knowledge and experience on that road.

Those options were scored and ranked. The top ranked options were taken forward for implementation.

... Concerning governance, that second area of need, some sections of road on this route that the heavy vehicles drive along are currently under council ownership. The middle is state government-owned, but each of the ends is under council ownership. We believe that is not the best governance arrangement for management of the road.

... Getting approvals is a problem for the heavy vehicle industry, particularly if there is an oversize load that needs permission from the council, then us, then the council and then us as they go onto the Ridgley Highway or come off the Ridgley onto the Bass Highway; but from an asset management perspective, if there is one asset with a user base of heavy vehicles, it is better if the asset is managed by one entity.

...

Mr READING - ... Following on from our initial investigations that Vanessa has spoken about, the Department further assessed and prepared some concept designs for the improvement opportunities that were identified in the freight efficiency study. A project team created a priority list by weighting each opportunity against some specific criteria, namely against safety improvements, the implementation expense, freight efficiencies and future road usage. During this review the team identified a further three road safety opportunities that were

associated with the Old Surrey Road-Mount Street road swap. This meant that the project, from a holistic point of view, was now considering 14 elements to address the freight efficiency study's recommendations. All 14 opportunities now make up the project that we are discussing today.

This project is diverse with many elements but the main outputs are to: formalise an existing truck rest area, complete with covered seating and washroom facilities; strengthen the two bridges that we saw today on our road visit on Massy-Greene Drive and install new safety barriers on those bridges; upgrade intersections at several locations on the truck route to prioritise heavy vehicles where possible; install new roadside barriers at various locations on the truck route; replace antiquated signage; do new line markings with the vision to prioritise heavy vehicles; and renew sections of existing road pavement in key locations on the truck route.

As an integral part of the project, the Department and the Burnie City Council are working through a road swap arrangement to exchange Mount Street, known as 'the old truck route', with sections of Old Surrey Road, known as 'the new truck route'. Vanessa has alluded to where they intersect. Having the new truck route exclusively under state government will assist in streamlining freight movements, lessen red tape for HV users and streamline management aspects around maintenance. Having Mount Street exclusively under Burnie City Council will allow the road to function as a local and collector road, meeting the needs of local community and improving strategic roadway planning into the future.

The sub-projects identified within the road swap are: construction of the new roundabout at the intersection of Mount Street and Thorne Street; upgrading and installing new traffic signals and pedestrian crossings at the Mount Street and Roslyn Avenue intersection, to not only help with traffic flow but also assist with pedestrian movement, especially since they are near a public school; compiling a detailed structural assessment report on the extensive Mount Street retaining walls; and, where possible, improving any structural deficiencies that are found, to ensure that the Burnie community is not unfairly burdened with future maintenance expenses that may be associated with the road swap.

The project is forecast to expend just under the \$20 million budget, inclusive of contingency and expected cost escalations. We submit that the project is an important safety upgrade that will improve freight efficiency on the Burnie truck route by reducing the red tape associated with heavy vehicle general access, removing the need for chaperone vehicles or the need for vehicles to slow to crawl speed over the bridges. It will assist the local community by returning a community road to council ownership in a much-improved state. It will improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists in several key areas, and will provide a truck rest area giving truck drivers a place to rest and check loads.

As a key member of the project team, I advise that the team is committed to engaging with the community on all aspects of this project, ensuring that the community is an integral part. We recognise the significance of the stakeholder engagement for the success of this project. We have engaged, and will continue to engage, with stakeholders to ensure key objectives of the project are delivered while remaining mindful of the available budget. We further submit that the estimated costs are appropriate for the works being considered. In conclusion, I strongly advocate that this project is a good use of taxpayers' money.

Status of Road Transfer Negotiations and Impact on Mount Street Upgrades

- 4.3 The committee recognised the road transfer negotiations with the Burnie City Council (BCC), in particular those relating to the Mount Street retaining wall, were fundamental in determining the full scope of the proposed works. The committee discussed with the witnesses the Department's ongoing negotiations with the BCC:

Ms RATTRAY - ... here's a line here about the need for work - that 'the upgrade of Mount Street is needed to ensure that this section of road facilitates safe and efficient local pedestrian,

cyclist and vehicle traffic'. Obviously, there's some ongoing negotiations with Burnie City Council around the transfer of infrastructure for those roads.

We've talked about some of the aspects of the retaining wall, and council wanting more information before they agree to the Mount Street component of that. Can you give the committee some understanding of where those negotiations are?

Ms KING - We worked with council to understand their perspective on what works well and what could be improved along Mount Street. We've also worked with some of the key adjoining users. We're particularly focused on some intersections - Roslyn Avenue and Thorne Street, and particularly at Roslyn Avenue. There's been quite a bit of engagement with the school to understand their perspective, as a generator of peak traffic volumes.

That's the background for that safe and efficient perspective. Does that answer your question? That's how we've come about identifying the need for works along Mount Street - by engagement with the local community, a traffic engineering perspective and a perspective of the users.

Ms RATTRAY - I'd like you to actually talk about the Burnie City Council and their expectations.

Ms KING - Where we're up to? Sure.

...

Ms RATTRAY - ...I am interested in those negotiations with Burnie City Council. One might think this is a great deal for Burnie City Council. Where are you with those negotiations in the transfer of assets between the state Government and the council? It says, 'the upgrade to Mount Street is needed to ensure the section of road facilitates' and those various aspects of it - safe, efficient and local.

Mr READING - The retaining walls we mentioned this morning -

Ms RATTRAY - Are they the sticking point?

Mr READING - Yes. We have concept designs around the other elements of the project. We have a high-level retaining wall report, but that was a visual report only, without any destructive investigation works. We presented that to the Burnie City Council and asked what they thought of it. The council reviewed the report and said, 'It doesn't spell out our liability for potentially taking on these retaining walls'. If one of these more significant retaining walls were to fail, for whatever reason, they could be up for many millions of dollars to repair.

They requested that we consider doing a more detailed, more invasive report about the structural integrity of the retaining walls. There's some negotiation around what that means. We don't want to be upsetting stakeholders or residents who border those retaining wall edges, so we are still at high-level negotiations around that aspect. In principle we have agreement. We have a way forward once we've come to a conclusion on the scope of works for the retaining wall assessment report. We'd table it at a meeting with Burnie City Council and say, 'This report recommends (a), (b), (c). Do you agree that this is sufficient to get us a deed transfer of road name?'

4.4 The Committee also sought further information on what work might be required on the retaining walls and how this had been factored into the project budget:

CHAIR - Clearly it's a bit of an unknown. You've coped with that by providing a certain degree of funding. I know you can't say what the funding is because it is not out for tender yet. Can you give us an understanding as to how extensive the funding is in relation to that?

Ms KING - We can talk about some aspects of it. We can't give you a construction estimate for the reasons that you have outlined. If we look at page 10 of the report, you will see we have given you a base estimate, which includes the investigations, design, community engagement, approvals, acquisition - of which there is a small amount we can touch on -, project management and the construction. The next line down is the contingency amounts for this project. Those contingency amounts -

CHAIR - That's for the whole project?

Ms KING - That's for the whole project. The contingency amounts are there to address risk, to address things that we might reasonably forecast at this point could be a challenge, but we don't know yet how big a challenge they are.

CHAIR - Is it fair to say you would have significant funds set aside?

Ms KING - Yes. That contingency amount under the P50 estimate is \$3 million in 11.

CHAIR - For the whole project?

Ms KING - Yes. Under the P90 estimate it's \$7 million. That's a suitably generous allowance for us to be confident that we can manage the risks within the project budget.

Mr READING - The visual assessment of the retaining wall structures that we have looked at hasn't identified anything of concern. Normally with a retaining wall that's starting to fail, you will get some identification. On this road, there'd be dips in the road, there'd be failures of the wall, there'd be drainage issues. We are reasonably confident that there's nothing major that is going to come out and bite us, but we can't give you any guarantees.

CHAIR - If it were to happen then you have funds.

Mr READING - There are significant contingencies set aside for that aspect.

Ms RATTRAY - You still haven't settled on the breadth of the high-level report that is going to be undertaken yet?

Ms KING - On the detailed report?

Ms RATTRAY - Yes, on the detail.

Mr READING - One of the reasons we haven't is that we want to engage with the residents and have that stakeholder interaction. We need to get some guidance and clarification back from those stakeholders as to their thoughts and ideas on what might unfold once we start this work.

4.5 The Committee was, however, assured by the Department's witnesses that the improvements to the truck route would proceed regardless of the outcome of negotiations with the Burnie City Council about Mount Street:

Ms RATTRAY - Is the transfer of assets a deal-breaker for the project?

Mr READING - No.

Ms RATTRAY - If it doesn't happen, will the project still proceed?

Mr READING - Absolutely. Elements of the project will still go forward. The road swap is one element -

Ms RATTRAY - Of the 13 or 14 other aspects?

Mr READING - Exactly.

CHAIR - The retaining wall is simply another component which may or may not happen, depending on the negotiations?

Mr READING - Yes.

Ms KING - In the conversation about the interactions and engagements with Burnie Council today we have talked quite a bit about the retaining wall. We're working through a number of other topics with Burnie Council. As far as I understand, they're all aligned. It's easy to focus on the stuff we haven't got sorted yet. We have sorted out many other issues with the Burnie City Council on this project.

Massy-Greene Drive Heavy Vehicle Rest Area

- 4.6 The Committee had visited the current informal gravel truck pullover area located on Massy-Greene Drive and was aware the Department planned to upgrade this into a formal, sealed truck rest area, with facilities for drivers, in broadly the same location. The Committee understood the importance of such facilities to the health, safety, and comfort of truck drivers, and was also aware of the growing number of female truck drivers. As such, the Committee sought an assurance the truck rest area was guaranteed as part of the project and suitable rest area facilities would be provided:

Ms RATTRAY - A question about the heavy vehicle rest area upgrade. That component now has a strong focus for State Growth when they are upgrading roads, and particularly this one, which is a heavy-vehicle usage road. Can you walk the committee through what is proposed there? There was some discussion on our site visit today on where that might be located. We originally felt it was going to formalise something that is already in place; that appears not to be the case, given that there are some TasNetworks lines there that might need to be moved. Can we have on the record what is actually proposed for that heavy vehicle rest area upgrade, with their toilet facilities as well?

Mr READING - After our site meeting this morning, I made a few phone calls to confirm various aspects. The nominated site - and it is early days, as I mentioned previously - is still very close to where we believed it was going to be. However, it is situated slightly north, towards the plantation trees. It is yet to be determined whether the TasNetworks pole will need relocation. It is very close. As we progress further into detailed design, that aspect will be considered then.

My further understanding is that there is a design of heavy truck rests being put together by, if it is not DSG, it is Australia-wide, NHVR [National Heavy Vehicle Regulator]. They are trying to pull them together so they sort of mirror each other. A rest stop is a rest stop for the heavy vehicle industry. I am not 100 per cent sure where that is in its design aspect, but our intent is to follow the guidelines

Ms KING - Is that potentially a national standard design?

Mr READING - Yes, that is how our consultant was explaining it to me - as a national standard design for a heavy truck rest area. Obviously, there are going to be constraints around that, given locations and volumes, et cetera. The wash and toilet facilities on this particular truck rest is still to be determined.

Ms KING - The location of them - but we are having a toilet?

Mr READING - Yes, we definitely are.

Ms RATTRAY - We don't know whether there are going to be toilet facilities on both sides of Old Surrey Road, or only on one side?

Mr READING - Again, they are looking at the national standard, which is in early days, but my understanding is that there will be a single toilet, a single shower, and a single rest and seating area. Which side is yet to be determined.

CHAIR - A shower as well; that is interesting.

Ms RATTRAY - Because they are rest areas.

Mr READING - They do have to take into account a number of considerations - existing services, septic locations and things like that. The concept design has not progressed far enough to give you additional detail on that.

CHAIR - We did ask whether it was a septic or sewer. I don't know if you managed to find out.

Mr READING - Yes, it will be a septic.

CHAIR - So there's every reason to believe that a septic on either side of the road could be the case?

Mr READING - Implemented, yes.

CHAIR - If needed.

Ms RATTRAY - Is it firm that there will be a rest area? We started off with a firm 'yes' in the area that was upgraded between Longford and Westbury, and then it just got taken out of the mix because it became too expensive and too hard.

...

Ms RATTRAY - We can approve this after our conversations, but then we have no way of being able to confirm that that would be the case, and I don't know how much comfort you can provide the committee today.

Mr READING - All I can say is that within the freight efficiency study that bore this project, the truck rest aspect was in the top three priorities.

Ms RATTRAY - But was it for Longford as well, to some disappointment -... for heavy vehicles to have to drive into Longford and try to find somewhere to park to use toilet facilities -

CHAIR - For a B-double, it doesn't work.

Ms RATTRAY - Yes, because we have female drivers as well, who can't just stand behind or between their trailers.

Mr READING - I can't comment on that, I'm on a different project, but my understanding is that this truck rest area is one of the highest priorities of this project and the fact that the informal area already exists and based on its usage, I can't see it wavering.

CHAIR - It's two hours from the west coast, maybe. It's a pretty important thing for a driver. They have to go somewhere.

Mr READING - And they know those curves and the descent so if their load has shifted or if they are tied down or something has slipped, that will be the place to check before they try to negotiate the city.

Ms RATTRAY - ... In or out.

Mr READING - Absolutely.

CHAIR - You were saying earlier that when you went up there this morning there were a lot of trucks on the left on the way out of Burnie on that park.

Mr READING - Correct.

Ms RATTRAY - Checking their load.

Mr READING - Yes, it is heavily utilised. I can't see it wavering.

Road Seal Options

4.7 The Committee understood road pavement on key sections of the truck route would be renewed. The Committee questioned the witnesses on the type of seal that would be laid:

CHAIR - ... you say these aggregates include the crushed rock used to build the underpinning structure of the road, the pavement, as well as stone used in sealing when mixed with bitumen, and used in concrete elements when mixed with cement and water. Is it an all-weather chip seal, or is it a hot mix surface that is going to be replaced there?

Mr READING - ... We do not have a seal design as yet. We do have an option paper for our consultant and there are three options that have been identified.

CHAIR - What would they be?

Mr READING - That is a chip seal, an overlay and a full pavement reinstatement.

CHAIR - With trucks, heavy vehicles -

Mr READING - And that is the consideration.

CHAIR - Is a hot mix arrangement not desirable, as opposed to a chip seal, which would perhaps give better drainage? I do not know.

Mr READING - The options paper does consider the capacity of the heavy vehicle usage on that particular part of Massy-Greene - particularly where they come down the hill, because the pavement that exists there at the moment is only eight to nine years old and, as we saw today, it is starting to break away. They have taken that on board within the options paper and said, whatever we did last time, we need to consider that going forward.

At this stage we do not have a solution, but we do have options to consider, and they are going to be further investigated.

CHAIR - Yes. How do they deal with that? Is it just the substrate that is a problem? Is it the fact that the road does not have a really good base and it just needs rebuilding from the bottom up?

Mr READING - My limited understanding is that if they make it too firm, too solid, then there is some reactive bouncing and - I suppose - waves that go back up through the substructure into the bitumen, and that is what initiates some cracking. There is a lot more in it than I understand. We just take advice from the engineers on that aspect.

Ms KING - ... Some of that advice comes from consultants the Department engages. We have inhouse specialists within the Department who can review and comment on the advice we get from consultants, so that we can get to a balanced technical perspective on the best options.

Sourcing of Construction Materials

4.8 The Committee sought to understand the specifications in place with respect to the road construction materials to be used:

Ms RATTRAY - I know this is a perennial question that gets asked around materials, but for the specifications under the licence in an arrangement with Transport Victoria, it says here, 'with appropriate modifications'. Are those modifications in place for this project?

Ms KING - Yes, they are standard State Growth specifications. The Transport Victoria specifications need some local Tasmanian modifications. Some of those modifications reflect legislation. The specification refers to a piece of Victorian legislation; well, we cannot have that in the Tasmanian document. There are some technical modifications, I think.

CHAIR - Probably to do with temperature and all that sort of stuff.

Ms KING - And the slightly different geology, which means the quarries are slightly different, so the quarry products are slightly different to Victoria's. That is what we are talking about there. We are in a position to avail ourselves of a larger state and the work that they have done. We do not have to reinvent the wheel, but we do need to finetune those specifications to make sure they are appropriate for Tasmania.

4.9 The Committee also sought further information from where road construction materials were expected to be sourced:

CHAIR - ... Will it be locally sourced material from local quarries? What is the longest distance that you might be taking resource away from, to where you need it?

Ms KING - The decision on which quarry to use is made by the construction contractor. We do not tell them which quarries to use. The quarries tend to be a trade-off, from the contractor's perspective, about where they can buy suitable materials at a suitable price and not spend too much transporting it to site.

Mr READING - But it will be a local contractor.

Ms KING - It will be a Tasmanian-based business.

CHAIR - You don't dictate that local quarries are to be used wherever possible?

Mr READING - We couldn't.

Ms RATTRAY - We have a buy Tasmanian local policy.

Ms KING - Yes, but nobody is shipping quarry materials from interstate. For the quarry materials the economics simply solve that problem.

CHAIR - No, but local. We are not bringing it from Hobart?

Ms KING - No. Again, the economics address it. On past projects, for example, I can think of one where some of the tenderers talked about bringing materials a certain distance. One of the tenderers considered expanding the functioning of a nearby quarry to get the materials from that quarry. That is an example of something that has happened in the past. We can't tell you what will happen on this because it is up to the construction market to come up with the most efficient solution to the materials handling problem.

Guard Rail Upgrades

4.10 The Committee discussed with the witnesses the features of the replacement guard rails that were to be installed on the truck route. In particular, the Committee wished to understand whether a rub rail would be installed:

Mr READING - Guardrails are supposed to protect the trucks from rollover and going further into the nether land. The existing barriers are regarded as antiquated and are to be upgraded.

... The bridge barriers where pedestrians walk over the bridge need to be upgraded as well to benefit the community.

CHAIR - Is the Armco likely to be taller?

Mr READING - Yes, I believe that the latest standard is for a slightly taller Armco.

Ms RATTRAY - Is it to be hard-up to the road pavement on the bottom? Or is there going to be a gap underneath, given that you have a lot of trees on those road verges, particularly at the top?

Mr READING - I will have to take the question on notice.

Ms RATTRAY - What I have seen in the new approach is that you have them hard against the road pavement. When you have significant wind and weather events, like we have had, rubbish is all over the road and you can't sweep it off because you can't get under. You'll need a road sweeper machine to come through and take everything off. It's probably okay close to Burnie. When you are talking 100 kilometres from Launceston, it's not going to happen very often.

Mr READING - From my understanding, the guardrails that go to the ground, one of the reasons is to protect motorcyclists from sliding under.

Ms RATTRAY - They only have to be this far off the ground. A motorcyclist is not going to go under there. It gets rid of all the debris. At the moment, you can't sweep anything away.

Mr READING - Correct. I agree. I will have to take that question on notice. It would be in regard to the Australian Standard, the heavy truck industry, whatever they dictate. I will get back to you on that, if I may.

CHAIR - Motorcyclists won't be using that route, so we don't need to worry about motorcyclists on that route.

Mr READING - No.

Ms RATTRAY - ... You only need this far off the ground to let the debris go. At the moment, there is nowhere to go, only onto the road pavement.

- 4.11 The Department subsequently confirmed that the replacement Armco guardrails would not abut the pavement, as a rub rail would not be required, due to the road being restricted to heavy vehicles:

...I can confirm that, due to the road use being restricted to vehicles weighing greater than 4.5 tonnes, the barrier being used will not require the addition of a Rub Rail (bottom rail), thus allowing space at the bottom of the barrier for water and debris to pass freely.²

Temporary Closure of Massy-Greene Drive to Accommodate Bridge Works

- 4.12 The Committee noted there would be a need to temporarily close access to Massy-Greene Drive from the Bass Highway to undertake bridge strengthening works. The Committee sought to understand how this would be managed to ensure minimal disruption to road users, residents and businesses:

Ms RATTRAY - I will place on the record that the bridge closure would impact people heading up Massy-Greene Drive. We had a site visit this morning, which was very useful for a non-resident of this area. I am interested in the work that is being done around the bridge strengthening and replacement of the railing.

Mr READING - ... Regarding the road closure for the bridge work, we have consulted with all the businesses that are going to be affected. We have discussed a future weekend to lessen the impact, and we've looked at alternate road avenues to get in and around Burnie. There are two options available to heavy vehicle users as well as local residents.

Ms KING - Can I just reinforce that it is a temporary road closure. It's not a permanent road closure.

CHAIR - Basically, it's a two-day road closure, is that right?

Ms KING - ... That's the current plan.

Mr READING - ... Yes, 48 hours. We did look at potentially only doing one side - pouring concrete on one side of the bridge, letting that cure and then doing the other side - but the engineers said if it is poured as one, it will be much stronger and the longevity will be improved.

Improving Active Transport Safety and Connectivity

- 4.13 The Committee noted measures to improve connectivity and safety for active transport users was a key deliverable for the project. The Committee was also aware the extent of these measures was to be determined, and was dependant on the scope of works required on the Mount Street retaining wall and the outcome of negotiations with the BCC. The Committee sought further information on what measures might be implemented to improve connectivity and safety for active transport users:

² Response to Question Taken on Notice - PWC Old Surrey Road Massy Greene Drive Upgrade, Department of State Growth, 23 October 2023, Page 1.

CHAIR - ... You did mention... safety for pedestrians and cyclists in several key areas. I presume you are talking mainly about the roundabout and the light systems on Mount Street....

...

Mr READING - ... You have already alluded to the pedestrian access around the roundabout, and the traffic light treatment for Roslyn Avenue. There are some high-level discussions around nice-to-have aspects for Mount Street - maybe lengthening foot paths, things like that - but it is still at very early stages. It may not materialise.

CHAIR - Is it achievable to connect the footpaths up? I know 80 metres of roadside doesn't have a footpath on it, but it has a retaining wall from one of the properties that blocks that footpath. Is it a possibility that this could be negotiated, or not?

Mr READING - Absolutely, it is a possibility. However, we can't commit to anything like that until we understand this retaining wall issue. While we don't expect there is going to be any massive undertaking that is going to jump up and bite us, we do have to keep a reserved stance. Once we do understand where we are situated with those elements, we will then go back to Burnie City Council and discuss aspects like that.

...

CHAIR - You were talking about improved connectivity and safety for active transport users, so cycleways. Is that from Mount Street?

Mr READING - Yes. Again, a lot hinges on this retaining wall detail assessment as far as financial aspects and where we can take the project from there, but we do have that pedestrian access across Massy-Greene Drive. That will be improved slightly so that people can move there. There is a subdivision being undertaken further up the road near Old Surrey and Massy-Greene and the DA for that is being referred back to us. At the moment, we haven't sighted it but that is also going to have some footpaths incorporated into it - it's a pretty big subdivision up there - so we may end up helping out in various bits and bobs there. However, that is still very high level and yet to be determined.

CHAIR - At least people who are looking at buying land there will know what they're getting themselves into when it comes to the heavy trucks.

Ms KING - It's another example of how we're working closely with Burnie City Council to ask what's going on in their world and to tell them what's going on in our world, and trying to problem-solve together.

Thorne Street Intersection Upgrade

4.14 One of the upgrades proposed for Mount Street was at the intersection with Thorne Street, where a roundabout is planned. The Committee understood as part of these works, there would also be a change to the exit from Bathurst Street on to Mount Street on the southern side of the the proposed roundabout, with exiting traffic being restricted to a left turn only. The Committee sought to understand why this traffic management measure would be implemented, and what consultation had been taken with impacted residents. The Department's witnesses

indicated the measure was formally implementing the known driving behaviour of Bathurst Street residents, who, for safety reasons, already currently enter Mount Street further north at Argyle Street when they wish to take a right turn on to Mount Street:

Mr WOOD - I had a question about one of the intersection upgrades at Thorne Street you mentioned this morning - that there will be no right-hand turn out of it, what was it?

CHAIR - Out of the southern entrance.

Mr WOOD - Into that roundabout. You have spoken to residents about that?

Mr READING - Yes, Bathurst Street empties onto Mount Street.

CHAIR - That is coming from a southerly direction?

Mr READING - Correct. Again, because it is offset to Thorne Street, and the topography, there is a problem with sight lines and distances.

CHAIR - It is on a crest?

Mr READING - It is on a crest. We have spoken to residents on that intersection and specifically into Bathurst Street. They have advised us that they don't try to turn right out of that street because it is far too dangerous. One of the council members we have been talking with lives in that street and said all the residents go in another direction downwards from the intersection, because it is safer to empty their vehicles out onto Mount Street further down.

... We are effectively putting no-right-turn signs on the end of Bathurst Street. We are implementing for a known problem and putting safety over everything else.

Ms KING - We are supporting the existing behaviour of the drivers. We are not undermining the behaviour.

Mount Street/Roslyn Avenue Intersection Upgrade

4.15 An upgrade is also proposed at the intersection of Mount Street and Roslyn Avenue, where Romaine Park Primary School is located, with traffic lights and pedestrian crossing planned. The Committee sought to understand how the decision to install traffic lights, rather than a roundabout, had been made, and whether there were other potential upgrades that may assist with student access to the school:

CHAIR - ... The other aspect was with the roundabout at the school. You were going to clarify whether the school association had been consulted with or whether it was just the principal.

Mr READING - Correct.

CHAIR - The traffic lights, was it?

Mr READING - Traffic lights and pedestrian crossing, yes. What happened was that our consultant wrote to the school and met with the principal. That was a week after the principal had time to discuss it with the association and people, but we did only meet with the principal. The next step for community engagement is to actually attend an association meeting.

Ms RATTRAY - ... At our site visit outside of the school, we also talked about the Department if funds allowed, and there was a need to have a drop-off point as well. Is that something that may be discussed when you go back to full consultation with the school community?

Mr READING - Yes, absolutely. Again, it's difficult to discuss that as a reality simply because of the unknown factor of these retaining walls. It's really been a thorn in the side of this project being able to commit, but if things sort of... pan out the way that we're expecting and there's no great issues, then we'll be back with the Burnie City Council and the school association and saying, 'Can we assess this area?' As we discussed this morning, there's a very small number of schoolchildren attending that school via bus at the moment and that was another option that we considered; maybe we can increase that number somehow by working with a better timetable and things like that.

Ms RATTRAY - Because you said there were only two bus times, 8 a.m. and 9 a.m.

Mr READING - Yes, which is one too early and one too late.

Benefit Cost Analysis

- 4.16 The Department's submission stated the project had an estimated Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) of 0.6, which equates to a return of 60 cents for every dollar invested. While this indicates a negative net present value for the project taken in isolation, the submission noted that:

... Whilst this is not an overly strong BCR result, the methodology assessed the numerous project elements in isolation and from an economic position only. When the project elements are considered from a holistic position, including social economic benefits, the BCR number is expected to be much greater. This is especially true of the elements pertaining to the road swap, that will improve community connectivity options for cyclists and pedestrians.³

- 4.17 The Committee asked the witnesses to expand on this assertion:

CHAIR - ... You have said on those benefits in the last paragraph that whilst this is not an overly strong benefit-cost ratio result, the methodology is to assess the numerous project elements in isolation and from an economic position only. Why choose that method if it is only looking at the economics?

Ms KING - There is a technique of doing the benefit-cost ratio work that the Australian Government prefers -

CHAIR - Okay, and you have to follow the rules?

Ms KING - Well, we need to do the BCR in a submission that we need to give them, so we prefer to just do it once and use their technique. We're confident that this is one of those items where, when you put it all together, you get a holistic benefit. That is not easy to measure and calculate, but we're comfortable that it's the right thing.

Land Acquisition

- 4.18 The Committee sought clarification on the extent of land that may need to be acquired for the project:

³ *Old Surrey Road and Massy-Greene Drive Upgrades-Public Works Committee Submission*, Department of State Growth, page 5.

CHAIR - ... What about the possibility of land acquisition? We talked a little bit about that this morning. It seems it's only in relation to council lands as opposed to private lands.

Mr READING - Not exactly. There are some very minor acquisitions still being assessed but we believe at this stage that there are some very minor acquisitions to be undertaken. We discussed at the Thorne Street roundabout, to get our minimum size of the roundabout we may have to acquire a metre of a resident's front yard retaining wall. We have discussed with that resident and they were very happy and -

CHAIR - Sorry, is that the footpath one you were talking about?

Mr READING - Yes, Thorne Street. At the Bass Highway - Massy-Greene intersection, we've got a very minor land acquisition on the corner transitioning left towards Burnie. Downhill from where we stopped this morning, there's a minor acquisition there of just one or two metres and that property owner is happy as well. They know they'll be compensated by the OVG and that was in regard to -

CHAIR - That is the Valuer-General?

Mr READING - Correct. The reason for that particular land acquisition was to help the larger trucks better negotiate the turn and then move into the flow of traffic. At the moment, it is very tight and you will often see them mounting the footpath with one or two tyres. There is nothing significant in regard to buildings or homes that we are looking to demolish and upset anybody or anything like that. It is reasonably minor.

Does the Project Meet the Requirements of the Public Works Committee Act?

4.19 In assessing any proposed public work, the Committee seeks an assurance that each project meets the criteria detailed in Clause 15(2) of the Public Works Committee Act 1914. Broadly, and in simple terms, these relate to the purpose of the works, the need for and advisability of undertaking the works, and whether the works are a good use of public funds and provide value for money to the community. The Committee questioned the witnesses who provided the following confirmation:

CHAIR - ... Our questions are based on the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1914. The first is: do the proposed works meet an identified need or needs or solve a recognised problem?

Mr READING - Yes.

CHAIR - And I need a clear yes.

Mr READING - Yes.

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

Mr READING - Yes.

CHAIR - Are the proposed works fit for purpose?

Mr READING - Yes.

CHAIR - Do the proposed works provide value for money?

Mr READING - Yes.

CHAIR - Your report tells us it does.

Mr READING - Absolutely.

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

Mr READING - Yes.

5 DOCUMENTS TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE

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

- *Old Surrey Road and Massy-Greene Drive Upgrades-Public Works Committee Submission*, Department of State Growth; and
- *Response to Question Taken on Notice - PWC Old Surrey Road Massy Greene Drive Upgrade*, Department of State Growth, 23 October 2023

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 The Committee is satisfied that the need for the proposed works has been established. Once completed, the works are expected to provide a safer and more efficient environment for freight vehicles on the Burnie Truck Route, and under the regulatory control of a single road authority.
- 6.2 The proposed works are to upgrade several sections of the truck route on Old Surrey Road and Massey-Greene Drive, with the aim of addressing identified freight safety, efficiency and reliability concerns. Road, bridge and intersection capacity are expected to increase to facilitate more efficient freight movement and cater for potential future growth in freight volumes. The upgrade of Mount Street and the associated road swap will allow the truck route to be regulated by a single road authority, the Department of State Growth, and will allow Burnie City Council to take ownership of what is, in essence, a local suburban road. The Committee notes, however, the truck route upgrades are not contingent on the road transfer and associated works and will proceed regardless of the outcome of negotiations on those aspects.
- 6.3 The Committee understands the location and number of amenities at the formalised heavy vehicle rest area on Massy-Greene Drive is yet to be determined. The Committee also notes the intention to provide a rest area on each side of the road at the proposed location. The Committee is of the view the provision of amenities on both sides of Massy-Greene Drive would be of great benefit to heavy vehicle operators and drivers. The Committee therefore recommends the Department provide unisex amenities on both sides of Massy-Greene Drive at the upgraded heavy vehicle rest areas.
- 6.4 Notwithstanding this matter, accordingly, the Committee recommends the Old Surrey Road/Massy-Greene Drive Upgrade, at an estimated cost of \$20 million, in accordance with the documentation submitted.

**Parliament House
Hobart
13 November 2023**

**Hon Rob Valentine MLC
Chair**