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THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON TUESDAY 24 OCTOBER 2017.

HOBART AIRPORT ROUNDABOUT

Mr FRANK GIANA, PROJECT DIRECTOR, STATE ROADS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH; **Mr DAVID CONLEY**, PROJECT MANAGER, PITT & SHERRY; AND **Ms TORI HARVEY**, A/G ENVIRONMENT AND MANAGEMENT, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

DEPUTY CHAIR (Mr Farrell) - Thank you for appearing before the committee today. Before you begin giving your evidence, I would like to inform you of some of the important aspects of committee proceedings. A committee hearing is a proceeding in parliament. This means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege. This is an important legal protection that allows individuals giving evidence to a parliamentary committee to speak with complete freedom without the fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place out of parliament. It applies to ensure parliament receives the very best information when conducting its inquiries. It is important to be aware this protection is not accorded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside the parliament and, as such, outside the confines of parliamentary proceedings. This is a public hearing. Members of the public and journalists may be present and this means your evidence may be reported. Would you like to make an opening statement on the project?

Mr GIANA - Thank you for this hearing. The Tasman Highway at this location was constructed in the early 1990s and is a dual carriageway; it is west of Holyman Avenue and the roundabout located at the junction of Holyman Avenue. The existing roundabout currently operates at near capacity; I do not think it is any secret that during peak hours significant queues now occur at the roundabout. It is predicted future growth will significantly increase the queuing and delay for vehicles, particularly during peak periods.

Significant growth has also predicted out of the Hobart International Airport through increased passenger numbers, increased freight task and commercial development within the airport precinct. The predicted growth is discussed extensively in the 2015 Hobart Airport Master Plan which predicts traffic out of the airport will increase by almost four times the current volumes. It is a significant increase.

The project involves reconstruction and upgrading of 1.6 kilometres of the Tasman Highway, including extension of the dual carriageway to about 1 kilometre further east from where it currently finishes. It also includes the removal of the roundabout. The idea of that is to free up traffic on the Tasman Highway and remove the bottleneck at the roundabout. As a consequence of that we have to put a grade separation in that will go over the top of the Tasman Highway to take Holyman Avenue and Kennedy Drive traffic.

The interchange will be a diamond format with traffic signals located at the ramp terminals. The reason we put traffic signals in is if we did not put them in now, we would come to a point in

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the future where we would have to put them in anyway because of the traffic volume increases, particularly out of the airport. We believe it is best value for money to put them in now.

The design would adequately cater for traffic growth until 2038. Even with the predicted traffic volumes in 2038, we will still have an adequate level of service. There is no reason to expect it would not still be serviceable even past that time, but we have only gone that far in our modelling.

That is basically the project in a nutshell.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Thank you. We had a site visit this morning and the submission you have provided is comprehensive. I note, from this morning, that some of our members had some questions. I will open it up to members of the committee.

Mr GROOM - Thank you, Deputy Chair. Is there any further information you are able to provide about potential impacts for local business and how are you seeking to accommodate those concerns in the design?

Mr CONLEY - With the businesses, the two or three that will be impacted the most were the ones we discussed this morning, being the Airport Hotel, the service station and that associated precinct. We had discussions with the owners of that site. We have not spoken to the leaseholders. Sultan Holdings are the people we have dealt with as they are leaseholders of the Hobart Airport. In turn they sublet various operations to those other businesses.

Access is still very good to those sites. Access is not diminished, but I understand their concerns are around visibility of the business and, as they see it, particularly with the service station; I believe they call it opportunistic. Their understanding is that a lot of people decide to go into the service station by virtue of approaching it and see it is a 'There are only two cars there, let us go in' scenario. That is a big driver of their business.

We believe it is a high standard access. It is for the benefit of the airport and the Tasman Highway traffic. Ability to drive to these premises is not diminished to any great degree. When there is congestion at the roundabout, under current circumstances, arguably it would be easier to drive to these businesses with the grade separation. There is this visibility of the business; the opportunism from the highway. We have said to the owners that we would erect signs - the standard tourist signs, the blue information signs - alerting people to the fact the businesses are there.

The other point is that with both significant growth on the Tasman Highway and with growth of around four times the current number coming out of the airport, you would think there is an upside and downside here. Maybe long term the business should be no worse off, if not better off, in future. That is how we have assessed it and the view we have put to the owners. That probably deals with those businesses.

The other business operation on the southern side is Greg Casimaty, and there is a landfill that runs in there. Paintball and motocross, I think, are the others, as well as longer term plans for a light industrial subdivision, as we understand it.

Mr VALENTINE - Isn't there golf there, too?

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Mr CONLEY - The golf is a different business. I will deal with Casimaty and then I'll move on to the other couple of businesses. Then I will deal with the two or three on the northern side of the highway that we have spoken to as well.

With Greg Casimaty, we looked at various options to provide access to that property. The owner would like direct access to Holyman Avenue. We attempted to reach an agreement with the airport over an access across airport land to Holyman Avenue and that was not supported by the airport. They said there are competitive aspects to providing direct access into the airport precinct for a landowner who might be offering commercial land for use of airport support services, so they didn't support it on commercial grounds. They didn't support it on grounds that the environmental issues were seen to be significant. Tori spoke about that earlier today, the difficulties in gaining approvals if what is seen as excessive amounts of threatened grassland is taken up and the footprint we've got in the project constrains or limits that to the minimum possible.

The third blocker, as we understand, is from the federal Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, Aviation Division, which did not support a connection across that land. Ultimately, having tried to make it work, we didn't see it as the department's responsibility. Should the department continue to press for a direct access onto Holyman Drive? The department's view was that we will proceed with the interchange as designed and we will provide a left turn-in, left turn-out arrangement onto the ramp for all properties in Cranston Parade.

I will go to other aspects that were looked at. We talked to Clarence City Council about the possibility of a connection back to Acton Road, either going all the way back to the Acton Road interchange or connecting back through residential areas onto Acton Road. We didn't get any support from council on that, other than zoning Casimaty's land as light industrial. The rest of it is a residential zone and their stated view was that it is not appropriate to have an industrial access going through a residential area. We could well expect there would be significant opposition if the trucks we saw this morning were running along rural properties on Acton Road. That looked highly problematic to us.

We have provided a good standard of access to Mr Casimaty, left-in, left-out, effectively directly onto the highway. In one sense it is a high quality access but it does not provide all the turning movements. The down side for anybody on Cranston Parade wishing to go to the airport or to the east is that they have to drive to Acton Road. The total extra journey is about 6 kilometres.

I am happy to take questions on that.

Mr GROOM - I have a supplementary question and it goes to the comments you were making in the briefing this morning about the EPBC Act approval process. You seemed to be suggesting that if you had a direct access onto Holyman Avenue, that would involve an impact of a larger area of land, and you believed that may trigger a controlled action process with a potential time implication for the project. Can you give us a feel for that?

Ms HARVEY - As David has probably explained, we went through a number of design iterations, and there were other factors involved in this, to minimise our environmental impact. We went with the final design we have. We reduced the impact to the critically endangered grasslands of Tasmania from about 4.5 hectares down to 1.27 hectares.

Also with this new design, we had a smaller area that is fragmented by this proposed design. Given the constraints and balancing all the other considerations, this was a design we felt would be

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able to meet our environmental requirements. We worked with the Commonwealth and we involved them early in the piece. We let them know we were going through these design iterations and we know we have a federally listed grassland. We had a couple of phone conversations with them regarding the proposed design and we did a lot of work with them to familiarise them with the project and to demonstrate to them we had been through a few design iterations to get to this point without compromising environmental safety standards.

We are intending to offset the remainder of the grassland and also some of those state listed species. Our intention is to do that through a Crown land order and we have a supporting management plan. Effectively, it protects those values in perpetuity.

Mr LLEWELLYN - Where are the offsets going to be?

Ms HARVEY - The offsets will be in situ. They will be within the balance of the remaining land after the constructions works. This morning DPIPWE provided us with a lot of advice on how to best preserve those values. We are taking their advice and going with that. We are still yet to receive the formal notice from the Commonwealth regarding our EPBC application. This morning, informal advice is the works themselves will not be seen as a controlled action and therefore will not require a permit at this stage.

Mr GROOM - For the record, because I know you have not had that confirmation yet, if your assessment was correct, under the current design, is it more likely it's not a controlled action? If you had an alternative design that had a larger impact area and it was deemed to be a controlled action, what sort of time delay could that involve? I know it is hard to assess these things, but can you give an idea of what that would be?

Ms HARVEY - I would say, maybe at a minimum, two years. Given the congestion issues and issues relating to that, the decision was made higher above that we couldn't go with that. There is a need to get this project rolled out as soon as possible. In conversation with our general manager, Shane, and also Adil Jamil, Manager of Project Services, State Roads, that decision was made to minimise that impact so we can continue with the project. We feel comfortable that we have a very good environmental solution for this project.

Mr GIANA - I asked a few people in the department, who have been here a bit longer than Tori, about times when we had some projects called in. One happened at Rokeby and it took 18 months to get an approval. The impact is nowhere near what it would be in this, in that there were arguments over whether the species should have been registered in the first place. That still took 18 months. Tori's view of two years, and according to people I have spoken to, is fairly realistic on what has happened in the past.

Mr LLEWELLYN - What would be the consequence of moving Cranston Parade further back towards the interchange at the point where the roadwork starts to incline, widening the slip road through and continuing it to the west to enable people coming from Cranston Parade to turn in on a slip road and into the road further west?

Mr CONLEY - Are you implying that Cranston Parade junction onto the Tasman Highway further to the west?

Mr LLEWELLYN - No, what I am proposing is that at that point, where we have the build-up - to enable people going westward, they can come off at that point and continue. The problem is if

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they are going the other way, they have to go through to Acton. If they were to turn there and this slip road was wide enough, even extending it westward, would that create the situation where traffic could then go both ways?

Mr CONLEY - Cranston Parade is currently a cul-de-sac and it extends to the last property. I do not think extending it westward, other than if it was connecting onto the highway, would solve the problem. It's more about where you are connected in at the eastern end. The first design we had brought Cranston Parade around here and joined it into this Llanherne Drive roundabout.

There is the existing roundabout and we had this configuration here. That fragmented it and took more of the grassland, which is one of the values the people who do the EPB assessments don't favour. It diminishes the viability. For that approval reason we didn't proceed with that option. We would have needed a lot more airport land to do that and we have hit blocks with the airport.

What else could you do? Could you bring it in here? It becomes a five-way intersection, which is not something you do today. We have also looked at a connection here, but we then introduced another junction on top of all the roundabouts that exist in the airport, a signalised intersection and one other plus the aspect of running two-way traffic. The traffic from Cranston Parade would have to cross this one-way traffic exiting the airport.

For all those reasons, it became problematic and the department's view was we should proceed with this with a left-in, left-out as something we think will work in the interim. Building this doesn't preclude any of these other things happening in the future. The environmental approval won't become easier in 10 or 20 years' time, but at a physical level there is nothing we are doing that says by building this you've suddenly cut off your options. Once we build the bridge there, we won't be moving that in the next 50 to 100 years. If the airport had a change of mind and agreed to a connection here, further down or back to Acton Road, those things can still happen in future. Despite all the discussion around Cranston Parade and the future plans, the traffic that uses that property is fairly low.

Mr LLEWELLYN - At the moment.

Mr CONLEY - Yes, that's at the moment. We are planning for the long term with the interchange, but there is a long way to go before that property develops into a bigger traffic generator. We have considered a number of options for locating Cranston Parade and this is what we have come up with as a solution that enables the project to move forward, all other things being equal. It doesn't rule out future changes.

Mr LLEWELLYN - Okay. That outlines the difficulty.

Mr VALENTINE - My question is in relation to the grasslands. You talked about where you are offsetting. What do you do when you provide an offset? Can you explain that to me?

Ms HARVEY - In accordance with advice from DPIPW, we were informed they would recommend an offset to manage the balance of those species within the area. The main species that was of concern from a state level was a species called a Lemon Beauty Head - *Calocephalus citreus* - and that was the first driver. When we started to have our discussions with DPIPW showing them what they were doing, they indicated an offset would be the most suitable mechanism to protect the balance of those values.

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Mr VALENTINE - Can you explain what that means? Is it replanting some somewhere else?

Ms HARVEY - No. The offset is simply protecting what remains. We will come through and do the construction project and it's the balance of that land. The reason they prefer offsetting in situ, within the wider project footprint, is that you are keeping as much as you possibly can of that patch or that population in that area.

Mr VALENTINE - You strengthen its protection, is that what offset means?

Ms HARVEY - Yes, you are. We are formalising the protection of that land.

Mr VALENTINE - In my mind, offset means you take it from here and you put it there.

Ms HARVEY - They can be. On advice from DPIPWE, they preferred we went through this offset of the balance of the land.

Mr GIANA - It comes about because we would have the land available to have an offset. The original concept for this interchange was going to big roundabout. In the 1990s, the department bought a significant amount of land that we do not require now. Consequently, the remainder of the land can be offset because we do not need it.

Ms HARVEY - Yes. It will be under a Crown land order, which is supported by a management plan.

Mr LLEWELLYN - We have approved this other submission that came in from Mr Merridew and he is asking three questions. The first, 'By virtue of Seven Mile Beach link there are some additional 2000 movements, which I hope are in current modelling.'

Mr CONLEY - The answer to that is, yes, they are. We recognise the loss of Surf Road, I think it is, the road at the southern end of the airport that has now been closed and replaced with Grueber Avenue. Yes, we recognised that and the traffic modelling we have done, as Frank said, took in volumes predicted in the Hobart Airport Master Plan.

Mr LLEWELLYN - The second one and it is probably the same thing, 'Does the modelling take into account the visions for the movement to the north via a potential link bypassing Cambridge, Richmond to Brighton Hub?'

Mr GIANA - I know that one. It comes out of Acton Road at the roundabout. Any traffic that currently comes down to Cambridge Road would be heading out towards the east and would come out of Acton Road. That almost shortcuts the main street of Cambridge. A lot of the traffic would still do what it currently does and any extra traffic would be on Acton Road rather than coming down here. There might be some who might decide to go all the way around the back, past the old airport, but it would not be a significant volume because most would turn in and come onto the highway at Acton Road, as they would now. I would not see a huge difference.

Mr LLEWELLYN - The third, 'Does the low-level waterfront land get considered as a corridor for four new lanes to service the first causeway (an opportunity to keep road traffic further north of any future runway extension)?'

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Mr GIANA - That is in planning at the moment. The department is looking at that corridor. Where we are finishing the dual carriageway, the extension of this would not stop you moving the alignment around. At the moment, if someone ever built four lanes through there it is likely to be on the northern side. You would not think they would put it towards the airport, it would be on the other side. Nothing we are doing here will defect any alignment in the future, I would not have thought.

Mr CONLEY - The airport is being extended. They have done the runway extension on that northern end as part of current work, so they will not be extending that for a long time into the future. At this stage you would expect the existing Tasman Highway, single carriageway, which might be a westbound carriageway under a future four lanes, would probably stay where it is. It might move a little bit north. There is probably no need to move it north, given the extension has already occurred to the airport.

Mr GIANA - If they ever did a major runway extension it will either go one way, or the other way; into the water. If it was to go to the highway they would probably do what they have done in Sydney. They have put it underneath their runway where they have a major road going under the runway. Here, it is a long way away before they would do anything like that, I would have thought.

Mr LLEWELLYN - I think that deals with that.

Mr GIANA - Yes, I believe we have addressed those.

Mr VALENTINE - It is complex with traffic flows through here, but given this is the main road to Port Arthur, what about cyclists? They have to negotiate this and I am interested to know how they are being catered for?

Mr GIANA - In a way, it will be easier for cyclists on the highway in that they won't have to navigate the roundabout. There is a 2-metre shoulder all the way through and if you go further to the east we have a cycleway, which is the shoulder - I know because I built it years ago - and it will connect straight into that. The other issue would be there are ramps coming in and they would have to be careful but there is no reason a cyclist wouldn't be able to travel down the highway more easily than they currently do. The roundabout must be a nightmare to ride a bike through, I would have thought.

Mr VALENTINE - And those heading to the airport?

Mr GIANA - There is a metre-wide shoulder on the ramps. Being signalised at the top, you are improving. It is a low speed environment and it would be fairly easy to get a bike through there. They'd fit in with the traffic, as they would in the centre of Hobart.

Mr VALENTINE - So they have been considered?

Mr GIANA - Yes. We haven't provided actual facilities but they have been considered in providing a facility that would make it better than it currently is.

Mr VALENTINE - I am looking at 2.4 on page 4. How high above high tide are we at this point?

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Mr CONLEY - Not a long way. I couldn't tell you exactly. The Tasman Highway is almost two metres above existing ground level. You wouldn't be overly aware of that as you drive through but it is about two metres above the surrounding. Very early in the options assessment we looked at whether there was any merit in putting everything underneath the Tasman Highway. We definitely knew we were below the low water mark there with eight metres and we wouldn't have been able to get drainage out. I reckon you have at least three metres to high water mark.

Mr GIANA - I would have thought here we are higher than further down the road near where the runway is. I think the airport runway would be at a lower level.

Mr VALENTINE - That's right, I have often wondered about that as I drive past.

Mr GIANA - That road does head slowly downhill.

Mr VALENTINE - As to pothole services, it says -

The information over power, telecommunications cables and sewer and water in the following sections is based on Dial-Before-You-Dig information ... using a vacuum truck to pothole services at critical locations.

Are you simply measuring the distance?

Mr CONLEY - Yes, the depth to them. 'Pothole' is a bit of an old term. The vacuum truck puts water in there, sucks all the material out and creates a small hole. We need to know the depth of them all so we can work out what fits and what doesn't.

Mr GIANA - We wanted to have a fairly good idea of what services were there to work out what it is going to cost.

Mr VALENTINE - Is that recycled water pipe going off to the Clarence City Council water recycling up the Coal River Valley, is it?

Mr CONLEY - Yes, it does go up there. I don't whether it goes anywhere else, but it runs along Kennedy Drive.

Mr VALENTINE - Under 3.1, it says -

Relocation of approximately 200 metres of Holyman Avenue is required to match the new interchange. This work will be done as part of the interchange works and will be transferred to HIAPL on completion.

Is it currently HIAPL land?

Mr CONLEY - Yes, that part of it is.

Mr GIANA - HIAPL leases that from the Commonwealth but they currently own the roads.

Mr CONLEY - It is this little bit in here

Mr VALENTINE - Okay.

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Mr GIANI - The infrastructure is there.

Mr CONLEY - This yellow line is the larger area the department acquired. This is the boundary with the Commonwealth land. This piece here has to be realigned, Holyman Avenue, to match the new Holyman Avenue. That is the piece we are talking about and we have to go through this major development plan. Even though it is a fairly small part of the work it is triggered by the impact on the sensitive grassland. We have the approval process, called a major development plan, under the federal Airports Act and that is the piece we are talking about.

Mr CONLEY - We did look in the early days at acquiring that land but the Commonwealth were not too keen on us acquiring the land. It is more about, we will move the road and it will transfer back to HIAPL, which owns all the infrastructure. We have been working with them to make sure they are happy with the standard of the road.

Mr VALENTINE - At 3.2.2, where you talk about Mr Casimaty's land, which is currently the site of the licensed landfill. The owner has recently had two commercial developments approved. What sort of developments are they?

Mr GIANA - We understand that is paintball and it might be motocross, but I think that has been there for a while. There might be some other development, a third which is not currently open.

Mr VALENTINE - It is not related to the airport?

Mr CONLEY - It is not an airport warehouse or anything like that, as far as we are aware.

Mr VALENTINE - I raised a question about frontages on Cranston Drive going back to Acton. If you were to block Cranston Drive so you did not have that little inlet you have coming off the ramp to Cranston Drive, the council would be concerned people would do a rat run through to Acton if the Cranston Drive properties had access to Acton.

Mr CONLEY - If they did, yes.

Mr VALENTINE - Is it a consideration that you would block the access at Cranston Drive?

Mr CONLEY - If Cranston Parade connected back to Acton?

Mr VALENTINE - Yes, so it becomes a cul-de-sac the other way.

Mr CONLEY - We have not considered that because we are proposing this as the solution at this stage.

Mr VALENTINE - They cannot do it right out, can they? Either way they are still going to have a detriment.

Mr GIANA - Cranston does not connect to Acton now and there is no plan for anyone to connect it. It would have to go through one of the private properties if they ever connect it.

Mr VALENTINE - That would be another issue.

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Mr GIANA - The council would want to approve it.

Mr VALENTINE - I was thinking of the rat run problem.

Mr CONLEY - A connection to Acton Road will not solve Mr Casimaty's issue of wanting direct access to the airport -

Mr VALENTINE - and having to go 6 or 7 kilometres to get to the airport.

Mr CONLEY - Yes, he will still have to do it. There might be a halfway solution. Such as, instead of going all the way to Acton, it might be connected back through the residential properties into Acton, and instead of it being 6 kilometres it would be four or something like that. It is still not a whole lot. There are still the issues of trucks and so on through residential areas and all those things.

Mr GIANA - The other thing to answer the rat run, rat runs are normally used because it will save someone time. If you wanted to go to Acton Road and you were near the highway end, you go to the interchange because that is going to be the quickest. If you are further down, you would probably go down Holyman Avenue, Grueber Avenue and Surf Road because it cuts out a significant length of road.

Mr VALENTINE - That is fair.

Mr GIANA - It would not be a rat run people would use because we have the two other options.

Mr VALENTINE - I suppose that is true.

CHAIR - A couple of brief questions we need to ensure we have asked to meet the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1914. Does the project meet identified needs or solve a recognised problem?

Mr GIANA - It does.

CHAIR - Do you believe this project is fit for purpose?

Mr GIANA - It is

CHAIR - Is it the best solution to meet identified needs or solve a recognised problem within the allocated budget?

Mr GIANA - We believe it is.

CHAIR - Is the project, in your opinion, value for money?

Mr GIANA - We believe so.

CHAIR - Do you believe the project is, because there are a few, a good use of public funds?

Mr GIANA - Definitely.

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CHAIR - Thank you very much. To remind you, while you have been in the committee you have been protected by parliamentary privilege. Statements you make outside this committee are not afforded the same protection, such as if you meet with media or other people.

We thank you for your time today, showing us the project and appearing before the committee. Thank you very much.

Witnesses - Thank you.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.