

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ON ISLAND TRANSPORT SERVICES MET AT ADVENTURE BAY, BRUNY ISLAND ON THURSDAY 1 OCTOBER 2009.

Mr BRENDAN SCHMIDT AND **Ms UNA HOBDA****Y**, NORTH BRUNY COMMUNITY CENTRE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mrs Rattray-Wagner) - Welcome to you both. We have received your submission so would one of you like to speak to that submission?

Mr SCHMIDT - Thank you for the opportunity because it is an important issue on Bruny Island. We represent today the North Bruny Community Centre Committee of Management. That committee is a subcommittee of Kingborough Council and we are involved in the building of a community centre at Dennes Point, which involves a shop, restaurant, cafe and an art gallery, as part of the infrastructure for locals and tourists.

The submission we make today is largely focused on a possible strategy that the committee might see as a viable strategy in one of its recommendations. We are not focusing on the current ferry service; the current ferry service is a successful service and is operated well in general. That is not to say that it does not have its problems or detractors but, by and large, that ferry services the island extremely well. Una might like to comment more on that later because she uses it on a daily basis.

The strategy that we look at is one that would involve a foot-ferry coming from Hobart to Dennes Point to service the needs of both tourists and locals. When you look at the analysis of the tourist data for Bruny Island, visitor growth over the last five years has been some 38 per cent for Bruny Island compared to 32 per cent for Tasmania. The number of visitor nights spent on the island has greatly outstripped the growth in nights for Tasmania. It is 48 per cent over the last year compared to 14 per cent for Tasmania. The numbers I am now going to give you are from Tourism Tasmania and measure only interstate and international visitors. There is a report that there are some 60 000 interstate and international visitors coming to the island. In the latest figures that comes up to some 78 000, but I will get to that figure. In 1998 - and they are the last figures we have from Tourism Tasmania - there were 71 800 Tasmanians visiting Bruny Island. They are the latest figures that Tourism Tasmania could give us.

You will notice that there are also a number of services that operate to the island that are not the normal car ferry. We have a tour operator who brings down their own clientele from Hobart for the environmental excursion they run at Adventure Bay. Another tour operator runs a different sort of service to get visitors onto the island because of the crowding of the ferry during summer. The ferry forecast figures are apparently projecting considerable growth. The figures from Tourism Tasmania and the figures that the ferry operator provides do not gel. I don't know quite where that happens or why that happens. TVS reports approximately 60 000 interstate and international visitors and that just does not gel with ferry numbers, however both sets of data are showing growth. I want to focus on these particular figures because Tourism Tasmania has been doing an absolutely fantastic job, which has shown that the total visitors to Bruny Island - and this

is in June 2009 - were up 31.3 per cent on the previous years. This is only for the interstate and international visitors because we do not have any figures for Tasmanians coming onto the island since 1998. We are 11 years out of date there. Compared to the total number in Tasmania it was up 6.8 per cent, so you can see that Bruny Island is getting an increasing slice of the tourist market. The number of total nights spent on the island is up by 17.2 per cent, compared to Tasmania which is up by 7.5 per cent. I raise these figures because there is an increasing demand for tourism services on the island. I have spoken to both Navigators and Simon Currant's group who provide fast ferry services for their own clients. Simon Currant's group go down every day from Hobart to Peppermint Bay. Captain Fell's have come to Dennes Point for the last year and a half; his tourist operator licence is currently under suspension, but he has been coming into Dennes Point on a daily basis over summer bringing some 40 people on the ferry. They just come and they walk up a beach and then leave again. Navigators are actually asking us for new tourist opportunities. So if we are able to provide a service to the Dennes Point jetty - Navigators gave me a figure of between \$3 000 and \$5 000 - if you spent that on the jetty you would have an all-purpose jetty for the modern catamarans to pull in. So it is not a very expensive operation to make the ferry terminal viable.

CHAIR - Brendan, do you know why Captain Fell's licence is under suspension, or is that something that you are not able to share with the committee?

Mr SCHMIDT - I don't know the reason for that. I believe it was something to do with the motor in the boat that he was operating.

Mr HALL - Did you mention that through the summer period, the peak tourism period, there is not an additional service that comes across from Kettering that competes with the other one?

Mr SCHMIDT - No.

Mr HALL - Is that a possibility?

Mr SCHMIDT - One of the things that we are looking at, and part of the reason for suggesting this, is that if we have a foot ferry across there is a place for them to land, obviously, but there is nothing there in the sense that would capture that. Now we have it at Dennes Point. What we are trying to look at is something which takes tourists directly from their hotels, from Salamanca, without putting pressure on already overcrowded roads at Kettering and around the ferry station. So what we were looking at is a strategy that provided a different option to overcome some of the significant problems that exist for the council and the ferry operator and for tourists and residents alike in the peak season.

Ms HOBDAV - I go over to work every day on the first ferry and come back on the last and in the peak season it is a nightmare because, for example, instead of getting to the ferry at about 20 past 6 to get the 6.30 p.m. ferry, if I am to be sure of getting home at night I really need to get there about 5.30 because there are so many people lined up and although they have to keep running while people are there, you could get home at nine o'clock at night if they run a next ferry. There are just too many people wanting to go and come back, and where we used to have day-trippers who would come over on the 9.30 a.m. ferry for the day and go back, the 9.30 ferry is always full and sometimes it is

just rotating, so they might not get onto the island until 11 and then they are often told if they need to get back to get a plane or they need to get back that evening at a reasonable time they really need to get to the ferry on the other side an hour beforehand, so some day-trippers they only have a very short time on the island.

We thought a foot ferry would solve that problem. People could leave their cars in town, because the other part of the problem is the roads, the infrastructure, and the cost to upgrade those, with questionable benefit. If we are looking at reducing our ecological footprint, which is what Bruny Island is about, then upgrading roads and things is not going to help that much. It would be better if we could have tourists who could come down, be picked up at Dennes Point having had a cup of coffee, be taken by a tour operator around the island on one bus rather than by cars with one person in each, and then be taken back to the ferry. We've solved the problem of the parking, we have solved the problem of the roads and we have got people to come down for a day on the island and then they go back and think, 'Gee, I wouldn't mind coming down for a weekend and planning a longer trip'. At the moment we are getting fewer foot passengers and day-trippers and an increasing number of people who are coming down for two or three days. So we miss out on a whole lot of people who cannot see the island.

Mr SCHMIDT - With the increase in numbers coming in, we know that the tourist operators indicate the average length of stay in Hobart is about three days. What tourists are looking for is a one-day package; they do not want to leave their hotel because they have booked the hotel for three days. They come down and want a quick ferry ride over, then a bus trip around to see some of the things - whether it is the environmental aspects or they want to drive down to see the lighthouse and pick up a bit of Nick's cheese and things like that. So, what they are looking at is being back again in their hotel for a shower, drink and a meal at 5.30 p.m. or 6 p.m.; and then they are off to Freycinet the next day.

Ms FORREST - And they haven't had to repack their bags.

Ms HOBDAY - That is right.

Mr SCHMIDT - They can go on another tour that they want to go and have a look at. What we have done is maximise the opportunity for tourist operators on Bruny Island. We have given the tourists a really good look at a number of things on the island during the day and an experience on the island which is quite different.

Ms HOBDAY - Often day-trippers come over to Bruny and then think, 'Oh, we'd like to stay the night' but there is not enough accommodation on the island because it is booked beforehand. They are already here and they do not want to go back on the last ferry or the second-last ferry, but they find they cannot stay. As a tourist operator, we often get phone calls from people at around 5.30 p.m. asking whether we have a bed available for the night, but accommodation was all booked out months ago. For example, our Christmas and New Year bookings have been booked for nearly 12 months. So people cannot change their minds if they have managed to get on the island at midday and realise they don't have time to see around - even though this is a small island in kilometres, it is a long island when you're driving - so they would like to stay but there is

nowhere to stay. So, that would also solve the problem for those people; they would be encouraged to come, but they know they could get back at the end of the day.

Mr SCHMIDT - To give you one example, we have had some interstate visitors who had to wait in the ferry line for over two hours. They got onto the ferry; as they were coming across to Bruny Island they looked at the line of cars snaking up the hill and they said, 'Do we have to wait at the back of that line?' The ferry operator said that they would have to wait for at least one trip, maybe two. Do you know what they did?

CHAIR - They went back?

Mr SCHMIDT - They turned their car around on the ferry. What we are trying to get at is that those sorts of pressures. The demand is increasing and it will continue to increase because I know that there has been another promotion on Bruny Island just recently which is State-funded and it will hit the airwaves across Australia before Christmas.

Ms HOBDAV - *Getaway* was on the island for the last two days, so they will be putting another advertisement for Bruny Island on soon. That kind of pressure could be alleviated so easily with little money. I suppose that is what we are saying, but at the same time we are cutting down the ecological footprint. That is the other part of what Bruny Island is about, which is important. We need to ensure that we are not using all the facilities we have and in this way we can actually cut down. If there were a ferry I could go to town every day and not drive my car so there would be a lot fewer people on the ferry in the morning going over if we had a fast ferry. We could afford to pay quite a bit of money for it because it is costing me at least \$24 a day now plus the servicing of my car.

CHAIR - This is to go from Dennes Point back to Hobart?

Ms HOBDAV - Just to go from Dennes Point to Hobart and return every day for work. I drive a hybrid Prius, so I have the best car you could possibly have, but it is costing me at least \$24 a day now plus the servicing of my car which we could afford to pay for a ferry - \$24 a day. Do you see what I mean?

CHAIR - Yes.

Ms HOBDAV - In fact, it would save a whole lot of cars on the road. It would save all of the road work that we are always asking for and with all problems with that, so it would be saving those kinds of things as well.

Mr HALL - You mentioned before, I think, Simon Currant's Peppermint Bay cruise that just comes from Hobart and goes down -

Ms HOBDAV - And then comes over to here on that trip.

Mr HALL - It does come over here?

Ms HOBDAV - Yes.

Mr HALL - Oh, okay.

Mr SCHMIDT - Normally they would just come straight to Peppermint Bay. People would get off, have their lunch there, and then they would go back to Hobart. They also come down here. He runs another operation down here. It is not the same day trip. It is a different trip.

Ms HOBDAI - He cannot afford to come on a ferry and then bring a bus here and then pick up people. He brings it down so that he does not have to do that.

Ms FORREST - This is going to Dennes Point?

Ms HOBDAI - No, it comes to Adventure Bay.

Ms FORREST - Oh, okay.

Ms HOBDAI - So this foot ferry would come to Dennes Point. That is the nearest point.

CHAIR - You indicated just prior to when we began, Una, that there is some significant infrastructure being built at Dennes Point that would service that type of foot traffic.

Ms HOBDAI - Exactly. At the moment there is nothing, but by 29 November there will be a shop, a restaurant, an art gallery and a big hall that will be completed, and it is going to be state of the art. So that will be available for people to come onto the island, to get their coffee and their cake and go off for the day, come back, have somewhere to sit while they are waiting for the bus to pick them up to take them around, have somewhere to sit and then walk straight down the hill and onto the ferry at night.

Mr SCHMIDT - It also gives employment opportunities for people on the island because basically you have the food and gallery. There are 35 professional artists on Bruny Island. There are 19 professional artists living on North Bruny and the exhibitions that they have held in the hall in the last three years have been quite outstanding. They have received a lot of praise for the work and its quality. In fact it has been quite a shock to some people to find that there are that many people on the island. You also have a number of food producers on both the north and south of the island and these people are selling their stuff into Salamanca and across the world, but again it is an opportunity for those people to merchandise those sorts of things. So it provides a lot of opportunity. We can maximise the number of people coming onto the island. They then have an opportunity to take away part of that island experience with products that they are going to take back, whether they are art/craft or food products, to their hotels or back into Victoria or Queensland.

CHAIR - Brendan, you have obviously identified Tourism Tasmania as doing a great job. Have they put the cart before the horse in some respects?

Mr SCHMIDT - I think that once you create the demand you are going to get the response from the private operators. I think it has come as a tsunami rather than a gentle tidal rise. If you take a look around in Europe or in Asia you will see that there are ferry services, and these are mature in terms of settlement. You will find that there are ferry services operating all around on those particular islands servicing what can be sometimes tiny little places that appear to have almost no other benefit than to drop off the mail or

whatever it might be. We are not quite in that circumstance, but you will see that there are those sorts of things that I think we are now ready for on the lower Derwent. I am not sure that Flinders and King would necessarily be in the same tourist area -

CHAIR - It takes a bit longer to get there.

Mr SCHMIDT - And the water is probably more dangerous than this would be.

Ms FORREST - You can't go on the water to King Island. A person has to fly.

Mr SCHMIDT - Yes. So there are these sorts of things. The old *Cartela* route that used to be from Dennes Point across to Opossum Bay and then back into Hobart might also service the people who live within the Clarence council area instead of them driving the 45 minutes into Hobart. So there are options on the water that I think for both locals and tourists.

Ms HOBDAV - I think the other group of people we have not mentioned are the schoolchildren who go across from here to private schools in town. Their parents either take them every day or they have to board during the week and come back on the weekends. If there were a foot ferry, those kids would be able to go every day and come back every day as well. So it would enable those families to live on the island for much longer in the year rather than have just their weekend shacks because it's the Friday nights getting home from work that's just amazing for people like me who go every day and think, 'Oh no, I've got to join the shackies'.

Ms FORREST - You don't look forward to Fridays like the rest of us.

Ms HOBDAV - No. Well, I come home on the earlier ferry because I just don't want to sit for hours. It is that kind of difference it will make for those people as well, so there'll be a roll-on effect for a lot of the community in Hobart that hasn't been able to be there.

CHAIR - Has any sort of a business case been done at all for this foot traffic?

Mr SCHMIDT - Yes, we've looked at a business case for that and we've discussed it with Navigators and with Simon Currant. They're looking at us to come back with tours that they would be able to put out. We've just had the appointment of the person to run the shop and restaurant and the people for the gallery. They will be involved with our committee to now get promotional stuff happening so that with these people we'll be coming down to see the tourist operators here and saying that we want to put some packages together so that we can operate this. They're keen.

CHAIR - Do you think they'd stack up without any public subsidy at all? There's a public subsidy at the moment, is there not?

Ms HOBDAV - There's a big public subsidy with the ferry.

Mr SCHMIDT - But I think you'll find that, contractually, the State cannot subsidise any competition to that ferry -

Ms HOBDAV - For 13 years.

Mr SCHMIDT - for 13 years because the current contract is until 2018.

Ms HOBDAY - And that's the concern.

Ms FORREST - Who manages and owns the jetty that Captain Fell's group was using?

Mr SCHMIDT - It's a State-owned facility. It's not council.

Ms HOBDAY - It's a State-owned facility - MAST

Mr SCHMIDT - MAST, yes.

Ms FORREST - So upgrades to that would be the responsibility of MAST?

Mr SCHMIDT - It's a very solid jetty. It was upgraded six years ago.

Ms FORREST - But to make it an all-weather jetty it would need a bit more work?

Mr SCHMIDT - All it requires is some more car tyres on the bulwark so that when they pull up it is not going to hit against them.

Ms FORREST - So it's not a huge, major structural work?

Mr SCHMIDT - No.

Ms HOBDAY - No.

Mr SCHMIDT - No, it's not structural at all; \$3 000 or \$5 000 was all that was required.

Ms HOBDAY - It's only car tyres, a bit of railing and a couple of steps. Depending on where the wind is, they've got to come in on both sides; at the moment you can only come in on one side.

Mr SCHMIDT - So, to answer your question, we would only be one of a number of tours that would operate out of Hobart and they're saying, 'If you can get the operations here and give them an experience, even if it's just coming across for lunch, that's fine'. Some people don't want to get up until 11 a.m.; they just want to roll on down, have lunch and a glass of wine somewhere and go home again. They said they could fill a boat with people like that let alone someone coming down at 9 a.m., getting onto a bus, coming down and doing a tour of the island, stopping off at various places and going back again at 5 p.m. What we were looking at is the ability of the locals and tourists to get off the island and go back to Hobart on the return trip so that you are creating a backfill situation for locals and for tourists who don't want to drive cars onto the island. There are a number of shackies, for instance, who come down, holiday house owners, if you like, and they use their own boats. They'll leave their cars on the other side; around Tinderbox for Dennes Point. They come back and forth to avoid the ferry.

Ms HOBDAY - Yes.

Mr HARRISS - Regarding the point that Greg raised about the business case and progressing that to support the viability of what you're proposing, have you approached Tourism Tasmania in any way to assist with the process?

Mr SCHMIDT - No, we haven't. We wanted to do two things before we did that. We wanted to make sure, firstly, that the facility we were looking at was completed. We wanted to make sure that the operators were still interested to do all that and what we wanted to do was to go with our operators because there are commercial leases that are being arranged with Kingborough Council and so we wanted to go with those to make sure we established that particular business case. We know it is late in the year to do that, but we know from early contact we have had with the two major operators that they are very interested, so that business case will not take long to establish. We know the numbers coming into Hobart and into that accommodation.

Some time ago Kingborough Council asked the islanders what they wanted regarding development on the island, and it was very strongly put that they did not want high-rise developments. We do not have the water or sewerage infrastructure up north for those sorts of things. We can then keep the accommodation in Hobart and have the ferry coming out. You do have B&Bs, and the number of that sort of accommodation is increasing on the island. That is the sort of accommodation that the majority of islanders supported with Kingborough Council when looking at development on the island.

Mr HARRISS - Does the committee have a view as to whether a quick-ride ferry would be desirable or a more leisurely trip to enjoy all that the Channel offers in getting here?

Ms HOBDAI - Remembering that a quick-ride ferry is not really a quick-ride ferry. When Rob first started his ecotour he took us up to Hobart and back on a Saturday to advertise it. It was supposedly a quick-ride ferry, but because of the restrictions on the estuary and in the river it is quick and then slow and then quick -

Ms FORREST - Speed restrictions?

Ms HOBDAI - Absolutely - you have plenty of time on the quick-ride ferry to see everything you want to see. It was just stunning and took us 35 minutes to get up there.

Mr SCHMIDT - It is a lot quicker than driving. It opens up opportunities for people to say, 'I live in a small community'. I will use the example of Hong Kong; Hobart is not Hong Kong, but when you go out in a small ferry to the islands and get dropped off in a place smaller than Dennes Point, and you walk across the other side of the island and leave from a fishing village, picked up by another ferry you think, 'Why are we not doing this?' The majority of people are still going to come into Hobart rather than Launceston for that Tasmanian experience because of the infrastructure there. This is a one-day, out-of-Hobart experience. It gives people a magnificent experience of a slice of Tasmania that makes them want to come back. The number of people who have come down and visited us in the last seven years, taken a good look over the island and have come back down to Tasmania three and four times and gone right around to Strahan and all the places up through the north-west and are now saying, 'We think this is the place to live'. It has changed their attitude completely. I think you will find it does assist the view of Tasmania, which can sometimes be negative on the mainland. It assists people to see that this is absolutely beautiful and progressive.

Ms HOBDAY - I also think it is an easy start. There are a whole lot of things that need to be done with the roads such as the Kingston bypass - you saw the lovely road you came on to get to the ferry and to park. In summertime the poor people who live here are driven mad. It is going to cost millions of dollars to upgrade all of that and the parking area for cars is not there, so you cannot leave your car parked and come on the ferry.

Mr SCHMIDT - The lines for the ferry went back onto the highway over Christmas.

Ms FORREST - I have been down there in the summertime and seen that.

Ms HOBDAY - That is millions of dollars, but this is thousands of dollars and can be done quite quickly as well. The road from Kettering to Kingston is bumper to bumper. You cannot really whip in your car to get to the ferry because you are following a car with a trailer or a car with a caravan.

CHAIR - Or a log truck.

Ms HOBDAY - Well, we will not even discuss log trucks.

CHAIR - They do use the ferry. It is a significant issue.

Ms HOBDAY - They do.

Mr SCHMIDT - They need to use that, and so do the farmers. Our sheep go off, all of those sorts of things.

Ms HOBDAY - That is right. And oysters that have to go off and those kinds of things. On a summer morning on the 7 o'clock ferry there will be an oyster truck and a log truck, and some farmers taking sheep off, and they have to have priority because that is what the island lives off.

Mr SCHMIDT - No doubt you are aware of the Kingborough Council's Bruny Island strategic transport study; that raises all the issues about the current ferry. Even if you put another ferry on and you have two operating, you still have not alleviated a lot of the problems that exist on both sides, and so we are trying to look at a different strategy. We will be open about it: it is coming into Dennes Point, it is the closest contact point, it is the quickest ride, but it also then provides that full island experience of going up and down in the buses off to various other tourist operators, and places that do not yet operate as a tourist venue but will if we can get -

Mr HALL - Just as a matter of interest, the two gravel patches we came through this morning, those couple of missing links, was it the intention of the Kingborough Council to seal those?

Ms HOBDAY - There are enough dollars to do the first bit -

Mr HALL - So are they under council or State control?

Ms HOBDAY - Main Roads.

Mr HALL - They are under DIER?

Ms HOBDAY - Yes, because the ferry is part of the main road. So DIER has given us money to fix the first bit of unmade road, which will take you up to Great Bay, but the road around by the isthmus is a problem because it is being eroded. The other thing is that it has Aboriginal significance and it has penguins. The penguins' habitat is right down the hill and they cross the road to other habitat on the other side, so in fact they have done a lot of studies there. The money we were given to upgrade the road does not look as if it will be enough to cover that area as well, so it looks like we will have the first bit sealed, but not that bit. Of course down to Dennes Point it is all unsealed, so there is still a lot of road to be sealed, but especially that bit which is a real problem because there has been an inroad of water -

Mr HALL - There is a small bit up near Dennes Point according to this map that is sealed.

Ms HOBDAY - That is just the city of Dennes Point.

Mr HALL - In the CBD, sorry.

Mr SCHMIDT - Mainly outside Myer, actually!

Laughter.

Mr HALL - I bought this map this morning just to impress the local member.

Ms HOBDAY - That is right. I am hoping the local member will take you to Dennes Point on your way back home so that you know.

Mr HALL - Next year he is doing that.

Mr HARRISS - Next year. We do not have a chance today.

Mr SCHMIDT - To summarise: we really want to maximise the number of people who use the island because that creates opportunities for islanders. If you bring people here you have employment here and that is important to people on the island. We certainly want to minimise the number of cars using the island because, as you know, there are tourist operators who will not allow you to hire a car and bring it onto the island. Bruny Island and Fraser Island I think are the only two in Australia where that currently applies. We want to minimise the number of cars using the Channel Highway and the ferry road. We want to maximise the existing accommodation in Hobart while increasing the number of people using the island, and make use of under-utilised waterways. You could have heaps of traffic using that which would increase the international flavour, if you like, of Hobart and the Southern Channel area. So we see this as a win-win situation. I do not think the business case is very difficult at all, particularly over summer. I am not going to say that this should be a five-day or seven-day a week, 365-days a year service.

Ms HOBDAY - Between December and Easter it is a goer.

Mr SCHMIDT - Even after that you would find that for weekends it would certainly operate financially on Saturdays and Sundays. If you ran one mid-week at least it would give someone like Una a chance to go to work.

CHAIR - Una is there anything on top of what Brendan has presented in his summary that you would like to add?

Ms HOBDAY - I think the only other people that we have not mentioned are the people going to medical appointments. I am also the chair of the Bruny Island Health Services Advisory Committee and one of the things we are now looking at is transport off the island for people with medical appointments. That is really difficult. The Red Cross has a car but, again, it requires people to drive; it takes a long time. If we had a foot ferry we would be able to get people to the ferry, they could go up on the ferry, be picked up at the other end - that is not a problem for the Red Cross - and taken to their appointments, brought back to the ferry and come home which would make it so much easier for those kinds of people as well.

As the people on the island are getting older and they are staying for good now, which they previously did not. It is just wonderful. I intend it to be my final resting place so we will be really old, wanting to go, but we will not want to drive our cars and it will be hard for people to pick us up. So, that is the other group of people that I think could really take advantage of this kind of foot ferry.

CHAIR - We met some of the very experienced locals in the kitchen when we arrived.

Mr HALL - You are not calling them old, are you?

CHAIR - No, experienced.

Mr SCHMIDT - We also have people in Dennes Point who do not drive.

Ms HOBDAY - That is right; a lot of people. It is amazing.

Mr SCHMIDT - They do not have cars and they are still living there. It amazes me.

Ms FORREST - What health facilities have you got on the island?

Ms HOBDAY - We have a beautiful new \$3 million health centre about to be finished, which is terrific. It is a wonderful community health centre with probably the most experienced nurses I have ever worked with. I have a nursing background. We have people who have skills in all kinds of retrieval; it is just brilliant. We have nurses, we have medical services one day a week and visiting specialists.

Ms FORREST - A visiting GP one day a week?

Ms HOBDAY - Yes.

Ms FORREST - And visiting specialists as well?

Ms HOBDAY - Yes; physiotherapists, OT, speech and things. This new facility will enable us to get more of those as well. At Dennes Point we have a private medical officer who is going to open a clinic one day a week down there.

Ms FORREST - That then raises the issue of getting these visiting specialists on and off the island as well.

Ms HOBDAY - That is right and they could come up. Now they bring their car.

Ms FORREST - Where is the health facility?

Ms HOBDAY - It is at Alonnah.

Ms FORREST - How far is that?

Ms HOBDAY - Just over the hill from here.

Ms FORREST - So, if someone needed transport they would come to Dennes Point -

Ms HOBDAY - Yes, that is not a problem because there is always one car down there that is on call.

Ms FORREST - That would reduce the amount of time it takes to get here so you could have another consultant down there, potentially.

Ms HOBDAY - Absolutely. The nurses who come over here to work are not all living here. They come over here in summer on the 8.30 a.m. ferry and when it is full it is a little frustrating for them, and especially for the people who are waiting for them. They get taken out of the queue to go on the ferry so that they can go to work.

CHAIR - I appreciate that.

Mr SCHMIDT - All I want to say in summary is that we were focusing on a different strategy because what we wanted to suggest to you is that we need to look at these sorts of strategies in the overall development of transport services to Bruny Island.

Ms HOBDAY - Yes.

CHAIR - I am sure that the committee, and especially the local member, appreciates a strategy being put forward. It is very easy to come and say we have not got this, but there is a strategy being put forward so I know, as a committee, we appreciate the work and the effort that has gone into providing it.

Mr HALL - I have a quick question. Is there an airstrip on the island?

Ms HOBDAY - Yes, there is, I think you are going to have a look at that on the way back.

Mr HALL - Okay.

Ms HOBDAY - It is a great little airstrip which could be used more. Planes fly in, mostly on trial flights, but there could be more use of that.

Mr SCHMIDT - There would be a bit of difficulty landing an A380.

Laughter.

CHAIR - On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you, Una and Brendan, for taking the time to make your presentation. We certainly appreciate it and we will do our best to get our report completed - we have obviously got a couple of other islands to visit so you are first cab off the rank.

Ms HOBDA Y - Thank you very much.

Mr SCHMIDT - On behalf of our committee, thank you very much for the opportunity.

CHAIR - Our pleasure.

Mr SCHMIDT - Just one question. Are you putting forward any interim reports or are you just going to put out a report at the end?

CHAIR - That has not been discussed at a committee level at this point, but if we do you will be one of the first to know.

Ms HOBDA Y - If there are any extra questions please give us a ring anytime.

CHAIR - If there is anything you may have missed giving to the committee, we would be happy to have it.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

**Ms BERNICE WOOLLEY, SECRETARY, BRUNY ISLAND TOURISM ASSOCIATION
WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.**

CHAIR (Mrs Rattray-Wagner) - Welcome, Bernice. Would you like to speak to your submission?

Ms WOOLLEY - On behalf of the Bruny Tourism Association I want to let the committee know about our major concern, which is the inadequate service over peak periods. The peak period used to be only January and February but it is extending as more tourism operators are expanding their season. Now it is starting in November and going until way after Easter. They are very busy times. We have different groups, but I will speak from the tourism point of view. Obviously there are shack owners and that type of thing. I am a resident as well. There are a lot more tourism operators on the island. I have a vineyard at Lunawanna and we have our own cellar door. People are struggling at the moment to decide how far to invest in their business. The ferry is a bottleneck, but it holds a lot. If they are not going to upgrade the ferry, we are not going to get the people through the cellar door, for example. It is the same with restaurants. They are open for a few months and then close again because they are not getting the foot traffic through.

CHAIR - Is it just the uncertainty of numbers that you feel is an issue?

Ms WOOLLEY - It is. I honestly believe we need another ferry. Most of the population is on the south of the island so when we are talking of the residents driving to the north of the island it is a long drive to Dennes Point. I really think that is a separate issue. I think a second ferry is necessary in peak time.

Ms FORREST - Are you talking about a foot ferry to south Bruny? Are you talking about a second ferry on the current route or a second ferry to a different area?

Ms WOOLLEY - No, a second vehicular ferry during peak times.

Ms FORREST - When you made the point, Bernice, that the majority of the population is in the south and either way you still have to drive up to the north and then go across on the ferry, is there any capacity from the south? I know it's further away obviously but is that something that should be looked at?

Ms WOOLLEY - It's a possibility, but it is a long drive to Dennes Point from Lunawanna.

Ms FORREST - Should there be some consideration given to perhaps the southern point of entry to the island?

Ms WOOLLEY - Yes, it is a possibility.

CHAIR - One ferry from?

Ms WOOLLEY - Say, Alonnah or somewhere like that.

CHAIR - With two access points.

Ms WOOLLEY - There used to be one that went from Alonnah across to Gordon back in the old days.

Mr HALL - Is the facility still there?

Ms WOOLLEY - There is a pontoon at Alonnah, which is the only remaining section of the old floating bridge. That is right on the foreshore so there is excellent opportunity to come in there. It can get pretty choppy out in the channel.

Ms FORREST - No ferries or anything come into Alonnah at the moment?

Ms WOOLLEY - No.

CHAIR - So most people who would live in that particular area would use the ferry from Roberts Point across to Kettering?

Ms WOOLLEY - Yes. From a resident's point of view, you are always doing shopping or something and you really need your vehicle in town.

Mr HALL - Was the one at Alonnah on a daily basis?

Ms WOOLLEY - Yes. It used to bring the mail over.

Mr HALL - Why did it stop?

Ms WOOLLEY - It was a long time ago. There was a much bigger population in those days. There was a lot of industry on the island - forestry, fishing, sawmills.

Mr HARRISS - The association submission promotes the addition of a single-level ferry to supplement what you already have and suggests that even a fairly small vessel would carry an extra 30 vehicles, so that cranks up the access for vehicular traffic. To go to the things that Greg asked Brendan a moment ago as to whether your association has started to produce any business case for such a proposition in terms of cost, what sorts of subsidies might be required, and how that could be facilitated, have you done any work on that?

Ms WOOLLEY - No. We have had discussions with Graeme Phillips and he has suggested that it would in the million-dollar mark to get a single-deck ferry to Kettering and then it is staffing after that because we would need two crews in peak times. Why we suggest a single-level ferry is that it is quick and efficient; quick to load and unload. Most of the new ones just click on, they don't tie up, so you need fewer staff.

Mr HARRISS - When Graeme suggested \$1 million, do you know what he's talking about in terms of where the \$1 million cranks in?

Ms WOOLLEY - I think he said approximately \$750 000 to \$800 000 for the actual ferry and then the rest to bring it over. He was looking in Singapore or somewhere like that.

CHAIR - So obviously there has been some preliminary work done on that?

Ms WOOLLEY - Yes. He's openly said that there is a big problem in peak times.

Ms FORREST - Just on that point, you're talking about how the new arrangements of the ferries that click on and go again as opposed to tying up, which is currently what the one does now. If you're going to enable a different type of ferry that just clicked onto the loading area and then went again, could you do both at the same jetty or would you need to have another one alongside? If you had to have another one alongside, would it be better to look at another location so that you have more options, say, to Alonnah? It would potentially increase the cost but there is going to be a cost of adjustment to the current jetty to enable that to occur.

Ms WOOLLEY - Probably Graeme Phillips would be the person to ask that. I'm not sure about that.

Regarding the backup ferry that they used when the other one went in for maintenance, they had to do some adjustments to the ramp there but there was talk that they would have to extend the actual ramp on this current one if they were to use that as a backup service. So you'd have to have a system in place where both would be able to use the same facilities otherwise you'd be going backwards again.

CHAIR - In the submission you talked about the breakdowns and what impact it would have on tourism businesses but you just said that there was a backup ferry as well. Is it that it's not available at the drop of a hat, so to speak; you have to have a structured time-out period for the existing ferry?

Ms WOOLLEY - Yes. It goes for its maintenance every couple of years and then they've booked this ferry that comes from Launceston. It's owned by a fellow from Victoria. It just comes down for the two weeks and then it goes back again. That's all booked well in advance so it's not something that they can call on. It's used in other areas.

CHAIR - So if the ferry happened to break down and this one up north or wherever wasn't available, there would be a significant impact on both residents and tourism and every part of the island?

Ms WOOLLEY - Yes.

Ms FORREST - For King Island there is I think a \$50 million line item in the budget to provide for a backup service and it's up to the Government to find that if the ship breaks down. Are you aware of any arrangement like that?

Ms WOOLLEY - Yes, it is in the contract that he has to provide the same-day service but it did break down one day and they just got a tug and that was pushing it backwards and forwards, which is not ideal. There were safety issues and things like that.

They can call on the *Kalandra* which is a small barge. It doesn't take trucks or heavy vehicles. The ferry that came down when it went on maintenance broke down and we had no ferry service for the best part of the day. It would have been about five or six hours that we had no ferry service so we had tourist operators who had accommodation bookings, et cetera, all cancelled. That is a major issue.

The other issue, and it's very hard to know any statistics, is the people that turn around. They get down and see the ferry queue and turn around. Graeme Phillips did suggest three years ago that it was 20 per cent on top that we're losing. I think it would be a lot more these days.

CHAIR - We had an example given by the previous witness in relation to somebody who just turned their car around on the ferry and said, 'I don't want to wait that long'.

Ms WOOLLEY - There have been a few shows coming down; we've had *Discover Tasmania* and, as was mentioned, we had *Getaway* yesterday, and they're really pushing. Tourism Tasmania has highlighted Bruny as the next tourism hot spot so it's going to happen and it's just a big concern that people are not going to be able to get here.

Ms FORREST - Do you think the strategy that was proposed by the previous witness for the foot ferry to Dennes Point would help to ease some of that? Do you think it's a positive thing or do you think that's not going to address it? I know you've raised other areas; people leave their cars and things like that and it's a long way from the south up to there. Do you think that is something that should be encouraged?

Ms WOOLLEY - Yes, I think it's a great idea. I think it's a completely different issue again. I think it would be a great business; like our taste of Bruny business because, as we were saying, we've got the wine, the cheese, oysters and fudge - everything now.

CHAIR - The berries; don't forget the berries.

Ms WOOLLEY - The berries, yes, seasonally. So I think, yes, it's a great business opportunity for someone to do something like that; a great idea. It's good for employment too. As more and more tourist operators are coming up, it's great for children and families on the island and it's good for employment.

CHAIR - It gives some experience to young people.

Ms WOOLLEY - Yes.

Ms FORREST - Is it a fair comment to suggest that if that was introduced it would actually bring people in excess to the problems that you're foreseeing, though, because there will be a different group of people that will use that service?

Ms WOOLLEY - Yes, I believe they are a different group.

Ms FORREST - So the problems that you're describing will exist regardless of whether that happens or not?

Ms WOOLLEY - Yes.

Ms FORREST - That will add to the number of people on the island, which is a benefit for the economy of the island, but the problems that you're foreseeing will be regardless of whether that happens or not?

Ms WOOLLEY - Yes.

Mr HARRISS - The other issue you address is the need to upgrade the airstrip, notwithstanding that it provides you a reasonable service anyway, but in terms of facilitation of even greater tourism visitation.

Ms WOOLLEY - There are two tourist operators talking at the moment about bringing people in by plane so it will be part of their experience. They would be flying in, going on a trip and then flying back, so it could get to a stage where it would be pretty well used. The other people were talking about doing walks, so the flight people then take them to do a walk and then they will fly out again.

Ms FORREST - That airstrip is used for your air ambulance transfers and that sort of thing as well?

Ms WOOLLEY - It can be, yes. Most times they bring in a chopper, but if that is not available then it is either that or the police boat.

Ms FORREST - So most of your medical transfers would be by a fixed wing or by helicopter?

Ms WOOLLEY - By helicopter.

CHAIR - Which does not necessarily need to land at the airstrip.

Ms WOOLLEY - No, it lands at the Alonnah oval, which is near the Health Centre.

Mr HALL - So, Bernice, going back to your opening comments, from an economic development point of view, if you had more in the way of facilities, an extra ferry or whatever, do you think that would give an economic impetus to the island for people like yourself to expand your business? Is that what you are thinking about?

Ms WOOLLEY - Yes, definitely.

Mr HALL - It would give you enough confidence. Do you make your own wine here?

Ms WOOLLEY - Yes, we do everything here. It is a bit hard to know how far to go, and a lot of the tourism operators are saying the same thing. It is the same with providing accommodation.

Ms FORREST - So basically you are concerned about the return on investment?

Ms WOOLLEY - Yes, that is it. For example the berry farm. I am not sure how much foot traffic they had through in their first year, but Kate's Berry Farm up on the east coast gets 60 000 people through in a year, so we do not have the capacity and that ferry is holding those figures down.

Ms FORREST - You have cellar door sales and tasting.

Ms WOOLLEY - Yes.

Ms FORREST - Do you have food and that sort of thing as well?

Ms WOOLLEY - No, we do not, but that is something that we are looking at. We would not do it at the moment with the current ferry service. It is holding us back a little bit.

CHAIR - You did not actually identify how many members you have in your tourism association, Bernice.

Ms WOOLLEY - I think it was 40 in the last financial year.

Ms FORREST - Do you know how many tourism operators you have on the island?

Ms WOOLLEY - That is a pretty good question actually. It would be well over that number. Including accommodation providers, it would be at least 60.

Ms FORREST - Forty out of 60 is good representation. That is what I am trying to establish - what percentage of the tourism operators are actually members of your association?

Ms WOOLLEY - The association produces - and I should have brought one - a non-profit map, brochure.

Ms FORREST - You mentioned that in your submission.

Ms WOOLLEY - Yes, and production of that has increased. We did a first print run of 50 000 and they went like hot cakes. It was amazing. So we had to do a quick run of another 70 000, and this time we have done 150 000, which is exactly the same as the whole of the Huon Trail.

Ms FORREST - So is that funded by the tourism operators on the island, or how is that funded?

Ms WOOLLEY - It is funded through some sponsorship from local businesses, and the advertiser pays a certain rate; it is \$145 for an entry on the map.

CHAIR - That is a considerable amount of information getting out to the wider community.

Ms WOOLLEY - It is, and they go into the information centres statewide as well, so they all actually have spots. There are only a few left over once we do our print run.

Ms FORREST - When did you say you put the first print run out?

Ms WOOLLEY - The first run was last financial year, and we are just printing the next 150 000.

Ms FORREST - You cannot equate growth in tourism numbers to one thing necessarily, but do you think that has been a factor that has increased your numbers?

Ms WOOLLEY - Oh, yes, definitely. You also have to look at the big tourist operators like Rob Pennicott. He spends a lot of money on marketing and he does a lot of export marketing and he goes to lots of seminars.

Ms FORREST - You are expecting more growth on the back of that?

Ms WOOLLEY - Yes, definitely.

CHAIR - Is there a visitor information centre on the island?

Ms WOOLLEY - There is not, but that would be a good opportunity for someone to do something like that.

CHAIR - Get yourself a blue dot or whatever other colour dot there is.

Ms WOOLLEY - Yes.

CHAIR - Is there any other point that you would like to over-express?

Laughter.

Ms WOOLLEY - No, I think we have covered everything.

CHAIR - Your submission certainly gave us a good overview. As someone who had not been to the island, I felt I had an understanding.

Ms WOOLLEY - Just a comment as a resident - and it was mentioned by the people before - my daughter has to board in town for high school and there is an issue coming back on a Friday night. Every Friday is just a nightmare. There is a big issue there for residents as well; it is not just tourists.

CHAIR - You do pay a cost for having this lifestyle.

Ms WOOLLEY - You do. Shack owners, they all travel at pretty much the same time. They all come down Friday night and they are all go back Sunday afternoon.

CHAIR - Do you have schooling here up to grade 6?

Ms WOOLLEY - Yes.

CHAIR - Where is the school?

Ms WOOLLEY - It is at Alonnah.

Ms FORREST - Do you find there are still parents who would send their children who are under six over to the big island?

Ms WOOLLEY - Yes. There is a bus service that goes to the Woodbridge High School.

Ms FORREST - Do any primary school children go off Bruny for their education?

Ms WOOLLEY - Some from north Bruny do. It is just as close for them to go to Woodbridge as it is to come down south.

Ms FORREST - Are children travelling to school charged to use the ferry?

Ms WOOLLEY - No.

CHAIR - The school bus would pick them up?

Ms WOOLLEY - Yes.

CHAIR - Would you like to make any comment on the fare structure of the ferry?

Ms WOOLLEY - I think it is very reasonable when you compare it to any other ferry around Australia or the world. It is very reasonable, but of course it adds up if you are a resident and you are travelling daily.

CHAIR - It is quite reasonable when you come over today as we did, but if you are travelling on a daily basis -

Ms WOOLLEY - Yes, that is right.

CHAIR - If there is nothing else, on behalf of the committee I would like to thank you and your organisation for taking the time and effort to put together a submission raising the issues you have and we will certainly be doing our best to get a report together as soon as we can. We have some other very nice islands to visit as well; they are King, Flinders and the Furneaux group. It has been very interesting already and we are looking forward to doing those trips as well, so thank you.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

Mr IAN BARWICK, SECRETARY; AND **Mr ALLAN REARDON**, TREASURER, FRIENDS OF NORTH BRUNY INC. WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Ms Rattray-Wagner) - Welcome, gentlemen. I will invite you, Allan, to speak to your submission.

Mr REARDON - I thought I would read through our written submission and then expand on some of the points we have raised there. Ian is the president of our group, the Friends of North Bruny, and we represent about 65-70 people now on the northern part of the island. I am the treasurer.

In October 2008 a number of ratepayers in the north of Bruny formed a group in order to better communicate with all levels of government and statutory bodies on matters of interest and significance to the community. Friends of North Bruny has a membership of 65 people, which is a mixture of permanent and part-time residents in the northern part of the island. Our group is impacted, just as every island visitor is, by the popularity of the vehicular ferry service which we believe currently delivers a first-class service, sometimes under difficult circumstances, but is unable sometimes to meet demand at peak times and it travels in all weathers. The number of tourists to Tasmania has grown in recent years and in the current economic climate these numbers may escalate as Australians choose more and more to holiday at home.

Bruny Island seems to be a tourism hot spot, as is evidenced by the demands on the ferry service particularly in the summer period when long queues of vehicles are often the norm. Obviously the result of the queues is that, on occasions, ratepayers will miss one or two crossings, leading to maybe several hours waiting time before embarkation. Whilst it is generally easier to time the departure from the island, nevertheless residents miss various appointments on the mainland - doctors, dentists and the like - due to full ferry loads and then the uncertainty of travel times when the ferry shuttles in peak times. This is frustrating for tourists, residents and businesses alike and at either end of the service it is disappointing to note the first signs of road rage appearing on the roads because of these delays.

Following feedback from my members, we would wish to be further involved in the dialogue process with reference to the following discussions points: the continuation and protection of fare subsidies to ratepayers along the principles of the national highway access concept; and consideration of a priority system that would allow ratepayers to enjoy easier access to ferry loadings. This process could be available on certain time journeys that would not necessarily interfere with tourist traffic onto and off the island. There are already tourist operators who deliver visitors for certain experiences onto the land - ecotourism, bushwalking and the like - where vehicles coming onto the island are kept to a minimum. There may be ways to further encourage and even subsidise those operators to further minimise the impact on island infrastructure and provide a public transport service. In the north of the island we have the unique advantage that a large number of shack owners arrive in the Dennes Point area in their personal craft, launched at Tinderbox, which already reduces pressure on the ferry and Bruny road. Maybe there

are means of delivering tourists onto the island that will not impact as much on the current infrastructure.

So they are some of the points that we wanted to put to the committee.

Ms FORREST - Can I just clarify one point? The way your submission read to me was that the ferry currently delivers a first-class service and that you are basically happy with it in difficult circumstances, but it is unable to meet demand at peak times and in all weather. So, are you saying that it can travel in all weather or it has been unable to at times because of the weather?

Mr REARDON - Well, I think that there would be very few times when the ferry does not cross due to weather.

Ms FORREST - You are saying that is a rare event?

Mr REARDON - Yes.

Mr BARWICK - It is a very rare event. It does affect the scheduling occasionally. They might have to wait a while before they sail if the weather is extreme but it is an all-weather service.

Ms FORREST - Right, thank you. I just read it the other way. I read that the weather often affected it.

Mr REARDON - It is a wonderful service. We are both retired so we can time our departure and visits to the island whenever we like so we are the lucky ones and, in fact, we both have craft that we bring over to our shacks at the north of the island.

It is the people who are working, who are permanent residents up in the north and throughout the island, who have difficulties. When the ferry shuttles, for example, it is taking heaps of people on and off the island. However, that means that people cannot really time it. I heard about a fellow from Alonnah who arrived there, had to see the doctor in something like an hour and half's time, but because of the huge backlog of tourist vehicles on the island they could not get on board and they had to wait there for an hour and a quarter and therefore missed the appointment. It is because of those kinds of happenings that we have put this submission to you and because we represent a wide range of people in the north.

I know Ian has some other thoughts about how we can make sure we are getting the best possible service - maybe there is a better way; if we had two ferries in the summertime it would be wonderful. If there is a way of stopping tourists coming onto the island it would also be wonderful, but of course, no one wants that. If there is some way that we could increase the efficiency of the current operation it would be good.

Mr BARWICK - The *Mirambeena* has a fair few years left in it yet, but I am not sure that it has reached absolute efficiency. We have issues about parking over at Kettering and whatever so the thought of foot passengers coming onto the island and using that ferry is a good idea to reduce the numbers of cars on the island, but you have to provide more parking facilities at Kettering. I can imagine there are issues with that.

As far as the operation at the moment is concerned, we have a view that it might be better to collect fares on the ferry, during the crossing, because it takes a fair bit of time in getting the cars from the queue onto the ferry. The other system to try to avoid is the shuttling that happens when there are overloads. If we could run an hourly service throughout the day then you would probably pick up, I think, close to three extra ferry services. That means some changes to how the crew manage the boat, but it is practical to load and unload the ferry and move an hourly service and collect fares while they are on the boat.

Ms FORREST - Is there a capacity for buying a fare on line?

Mr BARWICK - On the way down, we were speculating now that the Metro Green Card is out, whether there could be a card issued to residents or whether the ferry itself could have a tollway reader on it so you would simply drive onto the ferry and it would recognise a toll reader so that all the crew is then looking for is to get the tourists to pay. The thing that I think is relatively important at the moment for the people that have shacks on the island is that the time to get onto and off the island is increasing.

Mr HALL - You are both shack owners?

Mr BARWICK - Yes.

Mr HALL - You are not permanent residents?

Mr BARWICK - No.

Mr HALL - You may not have heard the first proposition that the service be a foot service from Hobart to Dennes Point. Would you use that instead of using your own vehicles or not in your case?

Mr REARDON - It would then be a matter of determining where we would pick up the ferry and where you park in the city. There are other infrastructure problems connected to that but clearly that would have attractions, I am sure, for quite a few people and particularly kids of parents who own the shacks and the kids come to the island.

Mr BARWICK - Or guests. If you have someone that you would like to have down for lunch or to stay overnight then the chance for them to come on as foot passengers carrying light baggage is good.

Mr HALL - I would imagine when you come down here sometimes you come down for a week or two at a time and you would probably need a vehicle anyway.

Mr BARWICK - Yes. To a certain extent we both do but I particularly use my own boat. We live at Snug so it is the trip from Snug to Dennes - but that is weather dependent, it really is. You cannot rely on that service at all from the Dennes Point jetty or to Dennes if you have westerly weather like we have at the moment, but we move around that. The ferry is important then if we have anything to deliver to our properties and really to get other people there. The number of tradies using it at the moment early in the day is growing dramatically.

Mr HALL - So you think that perhaps through that summer period, the peak tourist period, an extra boat would do the job?

Mr REARDON - Yes.

Mr HALL - Quite frankly, that is probably the only time of the year it would be commercially viable anyway.

Mr REARDON - That is right. The thing with the cost of it is that it would have to justify the end result but for about three months it would be a boon.

Mr HALL - December, January and February would that be roughly the period?

Mr BARWICK - Even a bit earlier.

Mr HALL - Yes, the tourist season starts a bit earlier.

Mr BARWICK - It is really on at the moment. There are a fair few people moving about at the moment. It is the interstate school holidays. It tapers off probably around Easter.

Mr HALL - It does.

Ms FORREST - When we were talking about the ticketing arrangements, if there could be a system that facilitated much more speedy entry onto the boat where you pre-purchase tickets, a swipe card or whatever it is, you made some comment that you thought it could increase the efficiency of the current vessel to the point where you could have three extra crossings did you think?

Mr BARWICK - Yes.

Ms FORREST - If you did that would you need another ferry because it would go to and fro more quickly? Would three extra crossings deal with some of these problems even in peak time, do you think?

Mr BARWICK - It would go a long way towards it because if you try to put another ferry in to run in between those times then you have to watch where the ferries cross each other mid-water and how they actually manage that. We had a classic case of what happens here when the ferry was off recently. We could not even get a phone call into the ferry company to make a booking to go across, the phone was continually engaged, so the technology that is being used at the moment I do not think is going anywhere near meeting demand.

Ms FORREST - Do you think that if there was an upgrade and investment in the technology to deal with those sorts of situations but to enhance the efficiency of the current service as the first measure that should be considered as opposed to looking at getting a new ferry that would have a reasonable impact?

Mr BARWICK - I do. Really you are looking at the possibility of an extra 180 vehicle movements in a day. The other thing that we were thinking then is that some priority for

ratepayers or residents at either end of the day to move on and off the island would help because people are investing a lot more money in their properties at the moment on the island and if they want to come down for a weekend they want to maximise the time they can enjoy it and not sit in queues.

CHAIR - Allan, do you think that residents having priority might cause more road rage?

Mr REARDON - Perhaps you are right.

CHAIR - People see you driving past and they might have been waiting for two hours.

Mr REARDON - Yes, we have had some horrible things up there over the years but I think if tourists knew that the ferry at 9.30 in the morning and the one coming back from the mainland at six o'clock was limited in some way - let us try to not encourage tourists to use those two journeys - that may be an answer to having a dedicated kind of line where residents would go and you would see the tourists saying 'Oh, yes, we are stuck here for another hour, it's okay for you'. I think there are things that you could look at in terms of trying to just get the efficiencies in train. Further to what Ian was saying, we have all travelled on the mainland through toll highways, and when you drive through it just clicks your car and you send off \$30 next month to the tollways and so in terms of efficiencies in getting vehicles on board, surely that is one way that would really escalate efficiency.

Ms FORREST - Do you have any idea of how many vehicles are turning around and going away because it is all too hard and the lines are too long? We have discussed that extra crossing could carry about 180 extra vehicles a day. What numbers are we actually looking at? Do you have any idea?

Mr BARWICK - I suppose we only have anecdotal views ourselves, but it seems to us that the ferry is not running at peak all the time but it is very close to it now. It is very often that both decks are in use. But certainly the weekend trips are busy. You could expect maybe once or twice a month to be delayed.

Ms FORREST - You don't have any idea, though, how many cars we are talking about here really?

Mr BARTLETT - No. I dare say the company would but no, we haven't.

Mr REARDON - Regarding the people who arrive at Kettering and see the extraordinary long lines there, I have heard a bit on radio talk-back about this and you hear many people say, 'I might go to Bruny' but they get there and there are too many people so they just continue on down south somewhere, and I am sure tourists would be a large number in that as well. But if you think about it, if you arrive too late for a journey and then there are too many cars there to make the next ferry and you make the following one, you are one-and-a-half or one-and-three-quarter hours sitting in line at the ferry terminal. People like ourselves would go back to the shack and say, 'We might travel in a day's time', but obviously some people don't have that choice.

Mr BARWICK - There are quite a number of people who come down for a weekend and work who do catch that first ferry off on the Monday morning because they know it is just so hard to get off on the Sunday afternoon.

CHAIR - In one of the submissions, and I am not entirely sure which one it is now, it mentioned that there used to be some services at the Roberts Point end to get a drink, especially if you are waiting on a hot day, but that is no longer available. Do you have any idea what happened? Was that service just not viable?

Mr REARDON - I know there have been a couple of operators who have gone through that little cafeteria thing there, and I guess it is just not viable. That is not to say that in the next few months it won't become fully viable again because of the numbers coming onto the island.

CHAIR - I know if you have children they are not very good at waiting, and if you do not have any food or drink for them they can get quite ratty.

Mr BARWICK - It doesn't improve the experience of being in a queue anyway. That is where most of the anger comes from, if you are stuck for two trips. And again if you happen to miss the trip at lunchtime at the moment, the 11.05, if you have a break there then you are not going to get back onto the island until 1.45 p.m., and to be stuck in the Kettering queue - and there are things to do over there, of course - it is a long time.

CHAIR - But you dare not get out of your car because, as Ruth noticed this morning, you have to run to get in it to get back in line. You nearly have to have someone sitting in the car read to jump in and drive.

Mr BARWICK - The thing that is surprising us is the increasing demand. Bruny is becoming a very popular spot. The cruise boats down here are adding to that, and I am sure development at the point will too.

CHAIR - And we heard previously as well that there are business people on the island who are not sure whether to expand their businesses because they just do not know whether there is going to be that infrastructure to support what they want to do with that business.

Mr BARWICK - You have the same issues with residents trying to get off to meet appointments as people trying to get on to meet appointments. There would be a two-way issue there, I think.

Mr REARDON - Dennes Point is just about to open this new development, the community hall, and it is going to be a wonderful thing, but we would hate it to fail because of lack of numbers. You need the supply of visitors and tourists on the island. I think there has been talk about the foot ferry concept to Dennes Point. Unfortunately when the jetty was replaced a few years ago they made it too small and now the much larger ferries cannot get in. The small ferries from Hobart do come down and drop visitors off for a bit of a tourism walk along the beach there.

CHAIR - It would be even more disappointing if the numbers were there but the access was not able to cater for those numbers.

Mr REARDON - Yes.

Mr BARWICK - I think tourist buses on the island would be good if a circuit can be worked out to travel the whole island and people could get on and off.

Ms FORREST - That was a point that was raised; some years ago there was a jetty at Alonnah. Do you think there is value in having some sort of access to the south part of the island so that people could use their vehicles or a foot-ferry type of arrangement?

Mr BARWICK - You either have to do that or have a public transport system once you drop people on the island. Either you put passengers where they want to be or you have to pick them up and transport them.

Mr REARDON - Alonnah would be a long bow to string because it is quite rough there. It is a long way from anywhere on the mainland to get to Alonnah. If I lived at Alonnah I would probably be going for it, but I think it would be a very difficult thing to accomplish.

Mr BARWICK - On the Bruny side, there is the Barnes Bay area and Roberts Point is relatively protected. I think the Peppermint Bay ferry, when it drops the visitors off, is finding that pretty inaccessible at any time of the year. If that was done with some kind of public transport, that would help with the foot passengers but it does not help much with bringing a bit of freight down.

CHAIR - Allan or Ian, would you like to raise any more key points that you believe the committee should be aware of?

Mr REARDON - I think Ian has hit it on the head. If we can end up with a much more efficient service from the ferry, that is the answer.

Mr BARWICK - In the short term.

Mr REARDON - It would be good to have two huge ferries to service the area. We understand that that may not be economically possible but, if you imagine missing one journey now and waiting and then missing the next one, you would almost overcome that if you had three extra journeys in a day. It would muck up the crew's lunch hours et cetera but there are possible ways of overcoming that.

CHAIR - There are ways and means of dealing with those sorts of issues. I have asked previous speakers to comment on the fee structure. Do the people who come and visit you think that the fees are fairly reasonable?

Mr REARDON - I think so. As a ratepayer obviously we have a subsidy and we have never found that a problem with our friends and family groups. I have not heard much complaint from those people who pay the normal public fare.

Mr BARWICK - We are off to Stewart Island in the south of New Zealand at Christmas for a wedding and they have a system on that island that if you are a resident or a ratepayer and someone is coming to visit you then there is a special rate for the visitor. That is not a bad idea if you want to attract people because at the moment the high fee that you pay

at peak times could be an issue for some. That is about the only other help that I could think of, that if you had visitors coming down to stay you might be able to have a booking system to allow them to get a slightly reduced rate.

CHAIR - Perhaps an improvement in some of the booking technology might allow for some of those things to happen a lot more easily.

Mr HARRISS - Madam Chair, just an observation; one of the challenges that the committee will face is coming to grips with the various competing issues related to transport onto this island and I acknowledge the comments by people who live on the island, that the ferry is congested and that we could have greater efficiency and yet, DIER tells us that the ferry operates generally at 40 per cent capacity. So, it is an issue; maybe they have got their numbers wrong, I do not know. It is a matter that we will pursue with DIER anyway, but if that is the case then - to be the devil's advocate - why do we need extra capacity? I know from my own experience of coming here for years with a shack at Trumpeter Bay and then subsequently just coming back and forth for business -

Mr HALL - Is that over a 12-month period, Paul?

Mr HARRISS - Yes it is the full year. That is the problem; that is the issue; it is over the full year. It is at the peak times, Christmas and Easter, when it is absolutely chockers. We all know that; the line is backed up to the Channel Highway and way back up the hill at Roberts Point and so on. So, it is managing the peak times, I think, more so than just what I might term the average crossing times. It is simplistic for DIER to say it is operating at 40 per cent capacity and then say, 'we're all right Jack'.

CHAIR - Is the ferry full or empty at night?

Mr BARWICK - I think there is a build up of traffic onto the island in the night. A lot of tradies come across to do their work. They come on the first or second ferry and then they will head off again on the 3.15 p.m. or 4.30 p.m.

Mr HARRISS - And that is growing, as you have said?

Mr BARWICK - That is growing. If you then add to that the movement of the shack owners and the residents or whatever then it is those days and those times of the day when it is busy. I think it you could inject another trip midday then us silly old pensioners can choose to travel at those times.

CHAIR - The very experienced people on the island.

Mr BARWICK - Yes, indeed.

Mr HALL - How many trips are you getting a day?

Mr REARDON - Six.

Mr HALL - Is it always consistently six? That is the schedule.

Mr BARWICK - There is an extra one on Friday night; there is a late one on Friday night.

Mr HALL - Right. That is 360 days a year.

Mr BARWICK - What we are thinking is that if you could get it down to an hourly service; if they could actually get the efficiency to do an hourly service it would be quite right. If they needed to drop one of those during the winter then they could make that decision on loadings.

Mr REARDON - Some people think that when the ferry shuttles at very busy times, as it does now, that is a good thing, but of course, you never know when the ferry is going to arrive. Permanent residents who need to get back to the mainland for whatever reason have no idea what time they are going to leave the island and if there were an hourly service on the spot then everyone would know there would be a reasonable chance of catching that ferry if they left at a certain time.

CHAIR - Yes, people do like to know.

Mr BARWICK - The only other real issue is to find a better way to manage the system when the *Mirambeena* has to be in dock.

CHAIR - Before we wind this one up, do you have any comment on the airstrip?

Mr REARDON - The only time I have used the airstrip has been in a medical emergency and it was bloody brilliant. I thought it was interesting that some time ago there was a company in Hobart was looking at running seaplanes down to Barnes Bay and using the old ferry terminal there to drop people off, but that is a tourism thing more than a method of transport.

Mr BARWICK - I have had no experience with it.

CHAIR - You have not thought about buying a light plane?

Mr BARWICK - No.

Laughter.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, gentlemen. The committee certainly appreciates the time that you have taken, firstly, for putting the submission in and then coming and appearing today. It is great to get some first-hand knowledge, I can assure you. We will do our best to put our report together in a very timely manner, but we have a couple of other very nice islands to visit as well.

Mr REARDON - Surely, our position is completely unique in terms of comparison to the other two or the other main islands?

CHAIR - Yes, we appreciate that. It is just that at the time when I was considering island transport I had listened to some talkback radio and had heard some of the issues that I spoke about with the local member, Mr Harriss, and we decided that it may be an opportunity to have a look and there was not very much being done at the time. Of

course the department and the Government have rallied a little bit since. So, at least we have done something; we have got them moving, so that is a good thing.

Mr BARWICK - The issue at Kettering is going to be quite significant with the new marina there. The traffic management along Ferry Road is fairly daunting.

CHAIR - I was looking just this morning; there is not a lot of opportunity to expand.

Mr BARWICK - No.

CHAIR - There is water on one side and houses on the other. Anyway, we will certainly take that on board. Thank you, we do appreciate your time today.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW

Mr KEITH BILL, PRESIDENT, BRUNY ISLAND PRIMARY INDUSTRIES BRANCH, TIMBER COMMUNITIES AUSTRALIA, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mrs Rattray-Wagner) - Welcome, Keith. Before you proceed I want to compliment you on the presentation of your submission. It is first class.

Mr BILL - Thank you. My name is Keith Bill, I live at 82 Dillons Road, Alonnah, and I am a farmer/grazier.

I thank the committee for the opportunity to make this submission. Primary industry is a vital part of Bruny Island's economy and with the enhanced ferry service, produce would be delivered in a more timely manner.

CHAIR - Keith, rather than read the whole submission would you like to highlight any particular areas that you think are worth putting on *Hansard* and make any additional points?

Mr BILL - Yes, Madam Chair. I say at the outset that I was a little unsure of the format for today. I believe that hopefully what I have put in the submission is to a degree fairly comprehensive and self-explanatory. I have more or less come along thinking that there would be questions asked of me rather than talking through the document.

CHAIR - That is fine.

Ms FORREST - Keith, you were not here this morning but we were talking about a couple of issues related to the demand on the ferry, particularly at peak times, and we have had evidence that the Government's figures suggest it is only 40 per cent capacity but that is across a 12-month period, I understand. There have been some suggestions that if there were a more efficient service with ticketing and getting on and off the ferry more quickly that could increase the number of ferry crossings. If that were possible, do you think that would be enough to deal with some of these challenges of the under capacity at the times of peak season?

Mr BILL - No.

Ms FORREST - What do you think would need to occur?

Mr BILL - As I indicated in my submission, I believe that over the peak periods there is a requirement for a second ferry. During the winter months the ferry that we have, the *Mirambeena*, is adequate for normal requirements, which is for islanders and produce going on and off the island. The overload seems to come with increased tourist activity during the summer months.

Speaking on the submission for the primary industry group, I stress that this does affect significantly movement of primary produce to and from the island. An example I can give and which you may have been told of previously is that there is no priority on the ferry other than for emergency services. Therefore with the movement of primary produce we basically get in the queue with everyone else. At times this matter is

resolved by the discretion of the master. To date I am unaware of any problem of produce not leaving or coming onto the island. Information available is that there is increased tourist activity. This has now been evident for the last probably three or four years and it is projected that tourist activity on the island will increase even further.

Primary industry, being a vital income-earner for the island, it is critical that movement of the produce to and from be expedited at the quickest opportunity. Oysters are going off the fresh and they must reach the market at an appropriate time without having to be refrigerated. Sheep and cattle sales: you may be aware that the major sales are at Bridgewater on a Monday, therefore primary produce has to leave the island on a Sunday afternoon or first thing on a Monday morning, which coincides with tourists leaving the island. As indicated, it hasn't been a problem to date but it may become a problem in the future.

Ms FORREST - For those times, should something like a dedicated crossing just for primary produce or where primary produce had priority be considered?

Mr BILL - Priority should be the answer. I don't think it would need a separate, dedicated vessel for primary produce.

Ms FORREST - Or the same vessel but one crossing?

Mr BILL - No, I think it would be able to work in conjunction, as it always has in the past with the movement of passengers and primary produce. That has never been a problem in the past and I would not foresee it as being a problem in the future. A priority system would be of benefit to the movement of primary produce to and from the island.

Mr HALL - With another vessel during the peak period, would you envisage it would have to be the same capacity or would a smaller vessel do the job?

Mr BILL - No, I wouldn't envisage a vessel of the same capacity; I would envisage a single-deck vessel. Maybe what could happen is that the two vessels cross mid-channel if you have sailings at the same time both ways. That is a scenario that I could paint for you.

Mr HALL - You wouldn't, for example, have that other vessel going into Alonnah? You would still come into Roberts Point? Is that the best place?

Mr BILL - That is an interesting question. That is where the infrastructure is at the moment. For another vessel to come to Alonnah, I think the capital cost for that to happen may not warrant that circumstance. That is certainly something that people may want to take on board, to do a cost analysis of that. My opinion is that the Kettering to Roberts Point has been there for many years now and it works. The infrastructure is there but it needs improving. That is what has been accepted historically and I would believe with upgrading it could be something that would still be sufficient for the future.

Mr HALL - Is most of the primary industry in the northern part of the island or do you have some down in the southern part?

Mr BILL - Bruny Island basically is two islands. The northern part of the island has a different topography, a different type of ground. North Bruny lends itself to sheep

country; South Bruny lends itself to cattle with some sheep. I believe that most of the oyster producers are on the southern part of the island. Primary produce is significant on North Bruny. As you are probably aware, the biggest player on North Bruny is Murrayfield and they have in excess of 10 000-12 000 sheep on their property.

Ms FORREST - If you had a smaller ferry using the same docking facility, is it likely you would need to have modification? It is unlikely that two ferries of different capacities would use the same docking facility.

Mr BILL - That would be a desired situation. A vessel purchased could be modified to use the existing facilities. I believe that would be a construction issue.

CHAIR - Keith, at this point we are going to adjourn your submission because the next witness has commitments. We look forward to getting you back to the table.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

Mr BILL HUGHES, BRUNY ISLAND ACTION GROUP, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Welcome, Bill. We would be happy for you to speak to your submission.

Mr HUGHES - The first thing I would like to say, and as I made clear in the submission, with the restriction on information that comes out of here it is very difficult, although I would hope the committee will have access to the full figures in relation to the Bruny Island ferries. They are very secretive about how many cars they are carrying and the rest of it, so there was some difficulty in preparing the submission. Would you be fairly clear on what the existing structure is and the set-up?

CHAIR - Yes. The committee in general have a good understanding of how things are working.

Mr HALL - BIAG, who does BIAG actually advise?

Mr HUGHES - We advise the Kingborough Council. We are a committee to the Kingborough Council, appointed under the Local Government Act.

CHAIR - Can I ask you about some of that information that is a bit difficult to get your hands on? Wouldn't the council have access to that type of information?

Mr HUGHES - No. It is strictly between DIER and the operator, to the extent that even the information that comes from traffic counters on the road can be difficult to get hold of if it is in the vicinity of the ferry terminal, which seems quite strange to me.

CHAIR - It is an interesting issue.

Mr HUGHES - It is, and how far commercial-in-confidence can be carried on when the operator has a 10-year contract.

CHAIR - To 2018, I believe?

Mr HUGHES - It goes to 2018, yes.

One of the main points I would like to make is in section 2 is where I say the following circumstances are not taken into account when loading the ferry from Bruny Island - that is vehicles carrying time-sensitive produce, vehicles other than school buses carrying students to school, people with medical appointments for treatment in Hobart and beyond, service vehicles such as the RAC recovery truck, freight trucks and log trucks. Then coming to Bruny it is the same: time-sensitive produce and students coming home from school and university. That can be quite bad because a lot of kids go to school in town and when they come back at the end of a long week on Friday afternoon they are in a ferry queue that extends up to the main road. This is to come home from school. Obviously people with medical conditions are in the same situation, as are service vehicles. Shopkeepers, food providers and freight trucks are caught up in that whole congestion. The existing service is inadequate. It cannot provide the service that it was designed to provide.

Ms FORREST - You are talking about the peak times or are you saying it happens more than that?

Mr HUGHES - This is more than just the peak times. The peak time is going off the island in the morning and then coming back in the afternoon and, in particular, later on in the week - Thursday, Friday.

Ms FORREST - So it is peak times during the day as well as peak times during the year?

Mr HUGHES - Yes. From Kettering, the 9.30 a.m. ferry is usually full - that's quite a hard one to get on to the island and usually the one before. Going off the island, the 10 a.m. ferry is usually full and regularly leaves people behind. Then later on in the afternoon coming to the island when you have the shackies coming over and the residents coming back from shopping in town.

Mr HALL - Bill, it was put to us this morning by some representatives that perhaps what is needed from Hobart to Dennes Point is a service for foot traffic. Do you think that that would take some of the heat out of the tourists that might otherwise come across from Kettering and that it might alleviate the situation if you had that sort of a service?

Mr HARRISS - Just to add to that, Bill, that suggestion means going from Dennes Point into Hobart.

Mr HALL - Yes.

Mr HUGHES - Yes, taking virtually a commuter vessel up to Hobart for the day. It probably has some merit - I'm not sure. Usually when people are going to Hobart, they have a series of things to do and a series of places to call so once you arrive in Hobart, unless everything you have to do is in Hobart itself, within walking distance, then you have the problems of getting out to somewhere else.

Mr HALL - I think they were talking more about people coming if they are staying in hotels in town, for example, and then they are linked in with the tourist experience down here. So instead of driving and coming in a car to Kettering, they come straight down to Dennes Point and then they are hooked into a local transport-tourism integrated system.

Mr HUGHES - That would be good if such a service existed. There are a couple of small tour buses on the island which cater for the ferry over here. There is one, I think, that does tours of the island. But there is not much of a service there.

Mr HALL - I was putting that point just to say that it might take some of the heat out of what is happening going across.

Ms FORREST - Take some of the cars off that ferry, effectively.

Mr HUGHES - Yes.

Mr HALL - Yes, that's the issue.

Mr HUGHES - Whether or not the people would get the same experience, not having their own vehicle on Bruny Island itself, but it is a good option.

CHAIR - It's almost a taster of the island, so to speak, and then you make arrangements to come back perhaps for an extended period.

Ms FORREST - The other option is for residents from the island who have, perhaps, medical appointments with medical staff in Hobart at some of the hospitals or clinics. They could either use a public transport system in the city or walk to it and then come back and pick up their car at Dennes Point and drive back to home here.

Mr HUGHES - Yes. I think it has some merit. I am not sure how much it would be used.

Ms FORREST - It is certainly a shorter trip by the time you got there and drove, and got across on the ferry.

Mr HUGHES - Yes, depending on the conditions, I guess.

Ms FORREST - True, yes.

CHAIR - It doesn't look a very big gap on the map but it is just a little bit different.

Mr HUGHES - I think it's about a 45-minute run up to Hobart off the ferry.

Ms FORREST - We are told 30 to 35 minutes.

Mr HUGHES - Yes.

CHAIR - That's a fast cat, obviously.

Mr HUGHES - The inadequacy of the existing service is having a negative effect on growth on the island in terms of people buying properties down here for holiday shacks or to live. They are not doing it. They can't because of that bottleneck there.

CHAIR - People expanding businesses, we heard in evidence this morning.

Mr HUGHES - Yes, it is very difficult. It is virtually at capacity now and for Bruny to take the next step and develop its tourism and other industry capacities, it just needs another ferry.

CHAIR - Could you talk a little bit about the discussions you have had with Mr Phillips as an organisation or as an advisory council?

Mr HUGHES - Yes. He has met with us three times now, I think. He does the best with what he has and he has indicated at a couple of the meetings that he has looked at vessels overseas, one in Korea and one in Canada. I think the one in Korea he said was about \$850 000 and the one in Canada was around \$1 million. Both of those were single deck vessels that he said that he could find other uses for in the off season so possibly I would imagine that would be either construction or with the fish farms. But there are quite a lot of vessels around the world that would be suitable for that run.

Ms FORREST - Did he make any comment at all with regard to the suitability of those sorts of vessels to use the existing facilities to dock?

Mr HUGHES - That is not a problem for most vessels. There were some problems with the vessel that they used as a replacement for the *Mirambeena*. I believe even with some modification that vessel could be made so that the ramp would go straight onto the deck rather than have to have a pontoon in the middle.

CHAIR - That is the *MV Flinders*?

Mr HUGHES - That is the *MV Flinders*, yes.

Mr HARRISS - Bill, you might like to indicate to the committee the extent of the difficulties with the use of that vessel; I mean vehicle damage. There was plenty going on at the time.

Mr HUGHES - I was up there on a couple of occasions when it experienced a lot of difficulties. The problem was the initial set-up of the ferry. As you know, there was a ramp coming off the ferry onto a pontoon and then a ramp going off the pontoon onto the land. The angle of the ramp coming from the land onto the pontoon was too steep for most vehicles except four-wheel drives and so quite a number of vehicles were damaged. One had its bumper bar torn off. But with modifications it did work.

Ms FORREST - With modifications. At that time that vessel was being used while the other was out of action so if you had two different vessels that were crossing over, effectively, do you think it could be achieved?

Mr HUGHES - Yes, definitely, without any problems at all. With a slightly bigger vessel that the ramp can just rest down on to, that would be no problem at all.

The second point I made there was that I would like to see the *Mirambeena* retained in public ownership. I do not know if there are any recommendations that this committee will be making but I would hate to see you recommend the sale of the *Mirambeena*. I would like to see another vessel, if it is bought, remain in public ownership, although obviously it would be operated by Mr Phillips as he has the lease on the terminals and whatever.

CHAIR - Can you tell the committee whether there has been any input from either your organisation or any other group represented on the island and/or council with the issuing or the reissuing of the contract?

Mr HUGHES - No. We did ask to have involvement and there was an indication that we would be consulted in the process. However, that did not happen.

Ms FORREST - At all?

Mr HUGHES - At all. The contract was negotiated commercial-in-confidence and that was given to us after the event.

Ms FORREST - So you were not asked for feedback about how you saw the current service level being met, even before they went into that process?

Mr HUGHES - No. We have made quite a few representations to the department and said that we would like to see this or that, but very little comes back the other way. It was only after the contract was signed and when it came up for review after 12 months - which was this year - that we met with Mr Phillips to discuss it.

CHAIR - Do you know if Mr Phillips put the community's concerns forward?

Mr HUGHES - No, I do not know.

CHAIR - He could well have put those issues to the department.

Mr HUGHES - It is possible, but I am not privy to that. I think these are questions that you are in a position to ask.

Mr HARRISS - Bill, in your submission you suggest that an extra single-deck vessel with a capacity of about 30 to 50 would be valuable in the peak times and you further said that your representations to Graeme Phillips have indicated that he reckons it is viable and he could source a vessel and have other use for the vessel in non-peak times. How far have you taken that in terms of representations to the department or direct to government?

Mr HUGHES - This is as far as we have taken it, to this committee, and we are pinning our hopes on your recommendations to a certain degree. After this committee reports we will be in a position to either support it or take other action.

Mr HARRISS - How far back were your discussions with Graeme Phillips on the matter?

Mr HUGHES - They were in March, April and June this year.

Mr HARRISS - It is encouraging to hear that Graeme thinks things could work, but clearly in the same ownership relationship that we had with the *Mirambeena*, it would rely on the Government buying another vessel with, most likely, the same operator, Graeme Phillips, operating the Bruny Island ferry service.

Mr HUGHES - That would be quite a suitable arrangement given that he already has the crews.

I am not sure if you are aware of this report and the work that is being done on Ferry Road at the moment. One of the recommendations is that they spend about \$550 000 on acquiring a section of foreshore for building and extending the car park. I would suggest

that if you spent that money on another ferry you would improve the service rather than building a bigger car park.

CHAIR - If you had quicker turnaround times you would not need to store cars.

Mr HUGHES - And it would be a better result for everybody.

CHAIR - I can see a smile from behind you so I am encouraged.

Ms FORREST - The plans are on display at the ferry terminal, are they?

Mr HUGHES - I think they are; they were certainly on display at the Kingborough Council. The project is a good one; it goes a lot further and includes a sewerage system for that area of Kettering and resealing the road. To me, that is unnecessary.

CHAIR - While we are talking about roads you might address your mind to the Neck. You have touched on that in your submission.

Mr HUGHES - Traditionally - and I suppose it is only 80 years ago - the Neck used to wash away and people used to wait for low tide to use the neck, and we seem to be heading back in that direction. There has been a lot of erosion underneath the Neck.

Ms FORREST - How long ago are you talking?

Mr HUGHES - About 60 or 80 years ago. It used to be the way to get from north to south. I believe the department is going to undertake work to stabilise that area and to stop the erosion.

CHAIR - We heard this morning that there is an issue with some Aboriginal middens or artefacts and also the penguins.

Mr HUGHES - You are probably right. I am not sure whether there is a midden there. That certainly should not stop any stabilisation. The whole road through there, or a good section of it, has been stabilised, and that work just needs to be continued, I guess, a big box of bluestone or whatever they have used in the other section. That would stop the erosion coming through there.

CHAIR - I am also mindful of your commitments, and children are very important. I am interested in the levy on tourists?

Mr HUGHES - Yes, the advisory group has been looking at this for a couple of years now and we have been in discussion with the Department of Tourism. What we would be looking at is charging a small levy of \$2 to \$5 per head which we would then use to fund tourism infrastructure on the island. At the moment tourism infrastructure is funded out of council rates pretty much, the jetties, a new toilet block going in here, at the rate-payers' expense, and whether they would be necessary without the tourists is another thing. There are levies charged on other islands -

CHAIR - We saw quite an extensive list there.

Mr HUGHES - Yes, and I think it is quite viable for it to be collected by the ferry operator, and that is one of the issues that we wanted to bring up when the contract was being negotiated, that a clause be put in there that should such a levy be introduced he would be responsible for the collection of it. However, that did not get into his contract, or I do not believe it is. I have not seen his contract, but I am pretty sure it is not.

CHAIR - Neither has this committee. It is something we may be able to follow up. When you have a look at the other places around Australia that do such a thing it is quite good information.

Mr HUGHES - It is, and a small impost would go a long way to improving facilities around the place.

Mr HARRISS - Bill you also give some background in your submission about the 1998 government decision to privatise and then the hybrid which we now have. You also suggest that there ought to be consideration to return to full government ownership, then all of this stuff would be disclosed anyway. There would be nothing to keep commercially confidential. Has your group got a policy position on that as to full government ownership and therefore the financial imperatives do not come into the equation? It just becomes a service, just like a road.

Mr HUGHES - No, we do not. That is my personal opinion, although I think there would be a number of the group that would agree with it. Most of the group would like to see the ferry considered as part of the road system, because it is effectively our bridge, and Mr Phillips resists that idea, as does the department, but it is very much our only link to the mainland.

Mr HARRISS - It could be argued, I suppose, that because of the subsidies available to residents it is treated as the road?

Mr HUGHES - Yes.

Mr HARRISS - in the same way as a Metro bus, for instance. The Metro does not ever operate in a profit frame in recognition of a public service being provided.

Mr HUGHES - Yes, that is true.

Mr HARRISS - I do not know whether that is an appropriate subsidy given the peak-time difficulty of access.

Mr HUGHES - There are two schools of opinion on the island regarding priority use of the ferry. One school is mainly older retired people who don't have time constraints so much and don't have to work. They can say we will catch a later ferry and they don't see any need for a priority but people who do have to be at the ferry at a certain time can see the need for priority.

Mr HALL - Bill, do you think that the current level of subsidy is adequate and doesn't add to the cost of doing business on the island too much? What's your gut feeling on that?

Mr HUGHES - I'd say it's probably not quite high enough but not extremely out of whack. It adds a fair bit to the cost of building down here and all the rest of it. I think they look at about 15 per cent on top.

CHAIR - That's significant.

Mr HUGHES - Yes, it is.

I hope that you can support the alterations to Ferry Road and resurfacing of that road. That was the other main point that I would like to raise with you. Maybe that money there could be reallocated towards the cost of a new ferry.

CHAIR - So, there has been no initial works undertaken at this point in time with that \$550 000?

Mr HUGHES - No.

Ms FORREST - Was a component of that for sewerage services in that area?

Mr HUGHES - Not part of that. I think the sewerage budget runs to about \$2 million.

Ms FORREST - Okay. That's purely on the road.

Mr HUGHES - That's purely on building a bigger carpark for the ferry.

Ms FORREST - I'm not sure how long it would take to secure a new ferry if that was the decision, but is there any way that efficiencies could be increased, in the interim at least and even into the long term as well, to mitigate some of these issues over the peak periods of the day as well as peak periods of the year?

Mr HUGHES - The ferry can't do any more than it does. It runs a shuttle with a full ferry going each way. They've introduced a better system now so that they really just have to load all the people; they have already paid their fares and they just have to load it. They're quite quick at loading and discharging.

Ms FORREST - You don't think that could be speeded up by pre-purchased tickets or anything like that?

Mr HUGHES - No, it wouldn't make any difference because they've already paid so there's a ferry-load sitting in the carpark already.

Ms FORREST - When we came this morning, though, we paid as we got onto the ferry.

Mr HUGHES - That's not usually the case.

Mr HARRISS - There is a booth at the top end of the carpark.

Ms FORREST - Yes, I noticed that was closed.

Mr HUGHES - Yes, they close that during the winter.

Ms FORREST - Okay. So if people are already sitting in the carpark and have paid, all they have to do is show their pass as they get on.

Mr HUGHES - They don't even do that; they just drive straight on.

Ms FORREST - So once you're through that area -

Mr HUGHES - Yes.

Ms FORREST - So there is no hold up at any other time such as peak times?

Mr HUGHES - No, there's no hold-up at all. The only thing that I'd ask is that the pain of waiting be alleviated for the people who are residents.

CHAIR - It has been suggested previously that they'd probably be able to fit three more crossings on with the ferry services. You don't agree with that?

Ms FORREST - With a more efficient ticketing system, like a swipe card.

Mr HUGHES - No, I don't think so. The ferry carries as many as it can and they load it and turn it around as fast as they can. They don't waste a second. They work right through. Quite often they will work right through their lunch break. I don't think they could go a lot faster than that.

CHAIR - Bill, thank you so much.

Mr HUGHES - I think it's a great committee and this is long overdue. Thank you.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

Mr KEITH BILL WAS RECALLED AND EXAMINED.

Ms FORREST - Do you think efficiencies could be increased in any way in the short term at least if a new ferry was to be purchased?

Mr BILL - What Bill said is 100 per cent correct. In periods of peak movement the ferry shuttles and it does that more and more frequently. It can't take more and it can't be more efficient than when they shuttle backwards and forwards. That decision is made by the master on the day; it is not a directive from the company. The master will make an assumption of how many cars are out there and he will continue to shuttle. History will indicate to them what the peak days are. I think in documents you have there are certain peak days already identified. Other than peak days, it is getting busier and busier.

I would like to briefly touch on the scenario that Bill put to you, using your own example today where the payment you made to come onto the ferry was collected by the ferry crew at the time you went onto the ramp. The booking section is open more and more regularly now, even in off-season on Friday afternoons, to get the flowthrough onto the vessel at the appropriate time without any delays. That is an initiative that the Bruny Island Ferry Company has taken up. They have seen where that can help with efficiency and quicker turnaround, so that is happening at the present time.

Ms FORREST - Is there an issue with the ferry operators having some prior expectation of the demand at that particular time? If there was a system where people could pre-purchase tickets over the Internet or however, would that make it any easier for them to try to fit another crossing in on that day?

Mr BILL - I would suggest not. It is difficult - and I will use the tourist aspect first and then I will come to the local residents. You might be able to pre-purchase a ticket, as you are suggesting, but that person might be told that the normal transit time from Hobart to Kettering is 40 minutes. They will work out that time to be 40 minutes and plan to arrive there 10 minutes before the scheduled departure, but they might be caught up at the Kingston junction or there might be some sort of rainfall coming up the outlet, so with whatever has been prepaid there will be something where they won't be able to get on that sailing. If people have booked for the next sailing, what do you do with those who didn't make the original sailing? The other example is in regard to the resident. When you're at the checkout at Woolworths at Kingston and you've got a booking for the x-time ferry and you're tenth in the queue and you say, 'How am I going to get out and get this ferry at my prescribed time?' it just does not happen. Another thing that was alluded to, certainly islanders - and this is the aspect here - when they are going off they can say, 'I'm going on the 8.25 a.m. ferry, I know it's going to be fairly busy, I normally get there at 10 past 8, I do have this doctor's appointment, I'll make sure that I'm there at a quarter to eight'. That is how the problem is overcome at the moment.

CHAIR - What about the priority lane?

Mr BILL - That is interesting. I will not say that that is a divisive issue for the island but there will be those who will say that they want it and those who will say that they do not want it and even Bill Hughes alluded to that himself, so where you will get on that I do not know. At the last community association meeting on Sunday two or three weeks

ago - and I will just give you this as an absolute example - there were in excess of 30 people in attendance and we took a straw poll. We had a group from Ferry Road come to us and speak to the submission that they had put in regarding the Oyster Cove-Kettering precinct plan. They came and spoke and we talked about this issue about priority so out of the more than 30 people there we asked for a straw poll from the chair and two people put their hand up and said they wanted priority, nine put their hand up and said that they did not want priority and the rest did not have an issue with it.

CHAIR - What about cricket training? Have you done a straw poll on that one?

Laughter.

Mr BILL - You have to be there at half past four.

Ms FORREST - Basically what you are saying is that people consider their own personal circumstances and consider what their view is based on that?

Mr BILL - Yes. While we are talking about that part of it, if you do not mind, one of the issues is becoming more difficult for us now and let us say during the Christmas period when it is peak traffic and you have the young mothers on the island, they have gone over and they have done their supermarket shopping. They have come back expecting to get on the ferry, they have missed the ferry, it is a hot day, the kids are crying in the back of the car, they have the ice cream melting and all that sort of stuff. There is all that sort of thing and these are things that have probably been said to you but they are factual. That is what is happening.

Mr HALL - Keith, if a priority system was instituted for residents, might that then turn the tourism trade off a bit? If tourists got to know that they might get down there but the residents are going to have priority, is that something you have thought about?

Mr BILL - I have certainly thought about that and my answer to that question is that before anything along those lines could happen, the whole of the marshalling areas both at Roberts Point and Kettering would have to be modified sufficiently that the priority lane would be there and could be identified. I am not quite sure how you are going to work through this but can I give other examples that you are probably aware of at the moment. Firstly, at Kettering the marshalling area there will hold a ferry load, at Roberts Point the marshalling area there will hold about two-thirds of a ferry, so the scenario there is in the peak period when you have your priority and here you are but you cannot even get past the queue of cars to get into your priority area and you are there 45 minutes before your scheduled time, the infrastructure is just not there for that to happen. I am sorry, from the question you have posed to me, my realistic answer is that that cannot happen until the infrastructure changes.

Mr HALL - I understand that. As I mentioned earlier, the question was if you got a negative connotation perception from tourists, the industry itself, that they might miss out.

Mr BILL - I would think not and the reason again I am saying that to you is that I believe you have a report from Denise Woolley that that happens in other particular areas. I note Vancouver Island, et cetera, where it happens. There are marshalling areas for locals and for others and that works adequately. There is probably no reason that, if a system like

that was implemented and it was there for a period of time, it would not be accepted both by the local community and the tourists.

Ms FORREST - A bit like coming through Customs; if you are Australian you go through the Australian lane.

Mr BILL - Yes, that is it.

CHAIR - What about the facilities at Roberts Point?

Mr BILL - In a couple of words, very poor. The standard at Roberts Point has been there for quite some time now. The toilet block is terribly antiquated. It is probably not what the tourists' expectations are of a toilet block, and probably it is not even an expectation of what the local residents would accept as a toilet block. With the infrastructure there, as I have just indicated, the marshalling area does not hold a ferry load. When you are outside that there are significant issues there, which have been pointed out in reports, that the queue of traffic can be up to 1.5 kilometres long and more. Let us say you have a disabled person in a vehicle and they cannot get down to the toilets. The car will come out, drive down to the toilets, the person will use the toilet, and then that car has to come back into the queue but all the cars have moved up so you are right at the very back. So the way it is done just needs to be modified to an acceptable level - and that is only the toilet block and part of the road. The other thing is the double lines for emergency vehicles. They have to cross the double lines to go down for people who are going down to pick up pedestrians who are coming off the ferry. They have to go around the outside of the double lines again to go down, so there are major issues that do need to be addressed. And while we are talking about Roberts Point, you can click over and the same applies to Kettering, so again for what would be accepted as normal usage in the winter period, the marshalling areas could be regarded as acceptable but certainly not the toilet facilities. I believe they definitely need upgrading.

Ms FORREST - You do say in your submission here that you understand that the owner is willing to assist to improve the issue of the amenities.

Mr BILL - Yes.

CHAIR - You said there needs to be some land acquisition.

Mr BILL - Oh, right, you are talking about that. Okay. Quite a few years ago Mr Grunseth made it known to Kingborough Council that he would make land available for additional marshalling areas. Unfortunately that is an issue that needs to go back to Mr Grunseth and Kingborough Council. There are issues there to be sorted out. They have been on the table now for quite a few years and at this stage it does not seem to be coming to a resolution.

Ms FORREST - You don't know what the hold-up with that is?

Mr BILL - I do.

Ms FORREST - Is it the hand over of title?

Mr BILL - Yes.

Ms FORREST - Money? If you can't say, it is fine.

CHAIR - We can take some evidence at the end if you like, Keith, if you would rather, in camera.

Mr BILL - I can do that, yes. I think that might be appropriate.

CHAIR - We are happy to do that, so if you like we will come back to that point.

Mr HARRISS - Can I jump in with a couple of other things, Keith, that you have referred to in your submission?

Mr BILL - Certainly.

Mr HARRISS - Regarding confidence and security of the air service, Bill touched on the matter of erosion at the Neck. The other matter in your submission of interest to me is the adequacy of the roads and some confidence that the community might be able to generate in the fact that we are going to get the road sealed as promised. Would you start with the security of the air service if you have finished with the other matters related to the infrastructure for the ferry?

Mr BILL - Yes, I am quite happy to do that. I was going to bring up this question under the Community Association; the issue I am talking to here was the primary industry.

Mr HARRISS - Park that one and come back to it as part of the other one.

Mr BILL - All right. The issue of the Neck I was going to bring up under the Community Association rather than primary industry.

Mr HARRISS - Roads in that as well?

Mr BILL - Roads are covered in the other one as well, yes.

CHAIR - Is there any further comment on the actual industries that are here, Keith? Obviously we talked a little bit about the cattle markets earlier.

Mr BILL - I think primarily what I wanted to present under the issue of the primary industry was that aspect of it, which is, as I indicated, the movement of sheep, cattle, oysters, berries, et cetera. The more general issues I would like to address under the banner of the community association.

CHAIR - In the absence of an actual hat, I will ask you to put your other hat on then.

Ms FORREST - Do you want to do this now or leave it until the end.

Mr HARRISS - We will probably come back to it at the end.

CHAIR - I think we will probably come back to it rather than ask people to leave and come back, so I think that will be a bit of a time-saver there. Keith, if you would like to move onto your next one and we will ask that other question at the complete end. So we will go to submission number 10.

Mr BILL - Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr HALL - I already have.

Laughter.

Mr BILL - I thank the committee for the opportunity to make this submission and hope that, as a result, action will be taken to improve access to and from Bruny Island for its community as well as its visitors.

CHAIR - If you would like to follow the same format, Keith, we will ask some questions and then we will go straight to Paul's questions about the infrastructure and air service first.

Mr BILL - Madam Chair, I would like to table some photos as additional information regarding the airstrip.

CHAIR - I think you have a very good camera, Keith.

Mr BILL - Thank you.

Laughter.

CHAIR - I would be happy to take those and I will hand them over to our clerk.

Mr BILL - If you could look at the photos and read the captions, Madam Chair, that would be appropriate.

Ms FORREST - A fair few planes.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr BILL - Bruny Island International Airstrip.

Laughter.

Ms FORREST - It does not look soggy, I must admit.

Mr BILL - Those photos were taken about 12 months ago.

Ms FORREST - It looks dry but you say it's soggy.

Mr BILL - Yes, that is quite right.

Ms FORREST - It is a bit swampy?

Mr BILL - The airstrip, as indicated, is in good condition. It is definitely an under-utilised asset of the Bruny Island community.

Only in the last 12 months there have been two tourist operators who are now using the airstrip to fly in their guests and I can only see this increasing in years to come.

The community fought diligently only two years ago to keep control of the airstrip. The history is that the land was donated by the Lowe family to the community. Using volunteer labour, the airstrip was put down and then became the property of the Bruny Island Council. In the council amalgamation in 1993, the airstrip then became the property of Kingborough Council.

About two to three years ago Kingborough Council was considering the sale of the airstrip and part of the reason for the sale of the airstrip was the high cost of maintenance. As Bill indicated previously, the BIAG - Bruny Island Advisory Group to Kingborough Council - asked how much money had been spent on the maintenance of the airstrip that Kingborough would require it to be put up for sale? We were able to determine information from Kingborough Council that they spent \$800 in the last 10 years.

CHAIR - \$800!

Mr BILL - Yes, \$800 in the last 10 years.

CHAIR - That was generous of them!

Mr HARRISS - A good reason for selling.

Mr BILL - So, as a result of that and probably using an example from the photos, we organised a fly-in because we had to demonstrate that the strip was being used.

So there should be a couple of things you would pick up from the photos there and we believe, as I indicated, it is an underutilised asset and the community would like to see the strip upgraded and become more of a major asset for the community.

Ms FORREST - With regard to the \$800 spent on maintenance, there must be some volunteer labour then because I would have thought, over a 10-year period, to even just mow and keep it free of debris -

Mr BILL - That is correct.

Ms FORREST - You would do a flyover to get rid of the wildlife. My understanding is that it would cost a fair bit more than that to maintain it in a useable standard.

Mr BILL - The strip was constructed in a good condition. There was a weed management program and the strip was being cut regularly.

Ms FORREST - By volunteers?

Mr BILL - Some of it was volunteer labour and that is how that was able to be kept going. You would have seen from the photo that the vehicles accessing the strip were packed on the main road. That is a very dangerous situation. We believe that in the area of the strip there should be a car park, even it is only for 10 cars or a couple of buses. Off the verge of the strip there should be another gravelled area which would take away, as shown in the photo, some of the planes. It is just the lie of the land itself, so you would have to know the strip to understand the topography. You would need a gravelled section for the proper parking of the aircraft and even for the tourist aspect of it. The last thing you want to do is park the aircraft and have tourists coming in from goodness knows where wearing their finery and standing in a puddle. I would like to think that as part of the island transport scheme there could be consideration - although in the discussions you will be having with others a lot of emphasis will be on the ferry - but I believe the airstrip has to be part of the consideration.

With regard to emergency situations, if something happened to the ferry you would need fixed aircraft to arrive. I do not believe that helicopter access would be adequate. I believe that fixed-wing access would be a necessity for supporting the island in emergencies.

Ms FORREST - Are there any fixed-wing aircraft based on the island?

Mr BILL - Yes, situated at the strip there is a hangar, which is on private property adjacent to the strip. That gentleman flies quite regularly.

Ms FORREST - How many seats?

Mr BILL - Two, I would think. There is other recent information I can pass on to the committee from Tasair. Tasair has used the strip in excess of 50 occasions this year and probably about two-thirds of those have been for training purposes. The Aero Club of Southern Tasmania has also used the strip significantly and they also use it for training purposes.

CHAIR - So there are no landing fees?

Mr BILL - No, no landing fees. That is part of the problem with Kingborough. They might provide the strip, but they do not know who is using it, how often, how they are going to derive revenue from it, et cetera. In the future there might be discussion with the Aero Club of Southern Tasmania and Tasair that they might have an honour-type system to contribute.

CHAIR - Which I should not imagine is too hard to do because they would have to give their coordinants when they are taking off.

Mr BILL - I believe that this area is unrestricted air space so I believe that there does not need to be authority for landing and take-off.

Mr HALL - The strip is currently useable?

Mr BILL - Yes, the strip is in current use.

Mr HALL - With the wet weather we have had - you were saying it is soggy and Ruth made the comment that it looks dry. What is the real issue? Is there a drainage issue on the strip?

Mr BILL - Yes, the land itself is in a soggy type of area. The actual strip and the verge is made to a standard, which is a good standard. As soon as you get off the verge that is where it becomes quite soggy and moist.

Mr HALL - Has that ever precluded anybody landing?

Mr BILL - Yes, it has. What has happened on previous occasions is that Kingborough will notify through their web site that because of certain conditions the airstrip is not be used.

Mr HALL - Who determines that? Is there a works person over there?

Mr BILL - There is a permanent works crew on Bruny Island from the Timber Council, yes, and their depot is at Alonnah.

CHAIR - That's pretty good to have that.

Mr BILL - Yes, I think so. Thank you.

CHAIR - The next part of that question was the Neck road.

Mr BILL - Madam Chair, if it's appropriate I would also like to table documents relative to the Neck. I'd like to, if you feel it appropriate, table e-mails I've exchanged with the general manager, Paul West, and his response. These are very recent, only over the last two or three weeks. I've also attached photos of the significant slip at the Neck.

Mr HARRISS - Can you give us a snapshot of that correspondence, Keith?

Mr BILL - I could read it if you like. It's my e-mail to Paul West dated 26 August, with copies to Councillor David Grace, Councillor Michele Higgins, Councillor Steve Wass and Mayor Graham Bury:

'Good morning, Paul. Please find attached the latest series of photos taken of the erosion at the Neck. These photos were taken on Monday afternoon, 24 August 2009.'

His response to me is:

'Keith, I've followed up concerns regarding the Bruny Island Neck road landslip with Peter Todd, General Manager, Roads and Transport with DIER. He responded early today to advise the following information on the status of the repair work:

1. Design is complete.
2. Currently seeking approvals under aboriginal heritage.
3. Flora and fauna reports being finalised for approvals.
4. Now able to source suitable rock from forestry quarry on Bruny Island.

5. The works will probably take two weeks to complete and expect completion

by late October (contract dependant).

Regards, Paul West, General Manager.'

That's dated 9 September.

CHAIR - There was no evidence of that the work as we drove through.

Mr BILL - That's correct; nothing yet. I responded to Paul West, General Manger, Kingborough Council on 9 September, again with copies to the councillors I mentioned previously:

'Paul, thank you for your prompt response to the identified problem of the landslip located at the Neck on the Bruny Island main road. I am appreciative that Peter Todd, General Manager, Roads and Transport, DIER is taking immediate action to instigate a works program to rectify the landslip problem. Would you please confirm that the cost of repairs to be undertaken at the Neck area will be from DIER's general maintenance program and not from the \$4.9 million allocated by the State Government in sealing of the main road on Bruny Island.'

A response back on 10 September reads:

'Keith, in response to your query I have received advice from Peter Todd that I can confirm that the repairs are from DIER's maintenance program and not from the road sealing project.'

CHAIR - So, all your money is intact at this point in time.

Mr BILL - Yes, at this point in time.

Mr HARRISS - That goes across, to some extent, the adequacy of the roads generally. Are there any other issues, apart from the sealing and the securing of the Neck, that you would like to address in regard to adequacy of roads?

Mr BILL - Yes. As Bill Hughes mentioned, he is a member of the Bruny Island Advisory Group of Kingborough Council. I am also a reserve member of that group. Roads seem never to come off the agenda. When it was known from the State Government that they were to allocate \$4.9 million for sealing of the main roads on Bruny Island this was to be done in consultation with the community. The community identified immediately that their first priority was the section of road at Great Bay, which you travelled through this morning. That section of road is 3.6 km in length. The advisory group and others indicated that if there was money to flow over from that, the money should then be spent on continuing the sealing of the main road, in this instance from Alonnah through to Lunawanna.

CHAIR - We haven't been on that road.

Mr BILL - That's quite right. The significant issue there is just as you go past the hotel at Alonnah; you come over an area called Tin Can Creek. That is the only wooden bridge left on Bruny Island. It is in bad repair, although it is still useable, but in the next three or four years significant maintenance has to take place. The bridge is on a bend so it is not a good area for vehicles to have sight. It is also a single-lane bridge so we were hoping that the monies left over from the Great Bay section of the road could go specifically to fixing up the bridge at Tin Can Creek, Alonnah.

CHAIR - Would it need realigning of that section as well?

Mr BILL - Yes, it would. As a group, we intentionally left off the area of the Neck. It was considered by the community that \$4.9 million would not address the significant areas at the Neck. As you have driven south today, as you come onto that section at the Neck, you would immediately on the left-hand side have seen a small parking area at the Hummocks. That area there has capacity to take about 10 cars. It is not uncommon using the ferry that you have come on today, the 9.30 ferry, that as they come through the Neck there could be up to 40 or 50 cars stopped there at the one time. Again, that area there is totally inadequate. Because that Neck is a game reserve, they will not take the carpark further into the Hummock, therefore the only way that problem can be rectified is by land reclamation which would go out into Simpsons Bay and which would then make that car park a little bigger.

Just past that area you have come through you would have noticed on the right-hand side all those white steel posts; that is the area of the photographs that I have passed over to you. On that right-hand side that just drops down. You will also have noticed that those white metal posts have now intruded into the road to make that road narrower at that area, so that is the significant problem there.

From there, as you come up about another 50 or 80 metres, there is another small carpark area for those who do not stop at the Hummocks to walk up the stairs and look over. As they are driving through that small carpark there, which can take two or three vehicles, that is their first view again to Adventure Bay. The same problem is being experienced there. There could be up to 10 or 15 cars parked in that area where there is sufficient for two, or coming back and taking their photographs from that small car parking area there.

CHAIR - And everyone travels at similar times.

Mr BILL - It is like Melbourne trams; they all come in a bunch.

Laughter.

Mr BILL - As you travel again another 100 to 150 metres you then come down to the lower side of the dirt road at the Neck. On a high tide and with a westerly wind that will come up to the road. The waves come over the road and it was only last month that the council grader had to come up and remove all the debris off the road so that the road could be opened for traffic. So there are significant problems at the Neck which the community believes \$4.9 million will not address.

CHAIR - That \$4.9 million has pretty much gone anyway before those works have been done that have been identified by the advisory group.

Mr BILL - That is exactly right. That is the reason why, in deliberation or consultation with the community, that section of the road was taken out straightaway, realising that the \$4.9 million would not assist in that area, because of the significant problems that I have outlined to you.

Mr HALL - How far do you expect that overflow of that Great Bay \$4.9 million would go south of Alonnah?

Mr BILL - Hopefully just past the bridge. The identified township of Alonnah starts just prior to or at the school, which is designated by a 50-kph zone. Then that 50-kph zone continues around past the hotel, over the bridge and then probably about another 50 metres up the road. The thoughts were that if that section of the road could be sealed that would identify the township of Alonnah.

We were told at a recent meeting that the \$4.9 million would seal the 3.6 kilometres and there would probably be nothing left over. That was worked out on the basis, again from what we were told by DIER, that they would have to bring 30 000 tonnes of gravel onto the road to use as the base. What is happening at the moment is that they are now trying to identify a quarry on Bruny Island that they can use and obtain the base metal from the island, which will save a significant amount. That is being undertaken at the moment. Probably a couple of months ago the \$4.9 million was going to do only 3.6 kilometres and now we are hopeful that there will be an overflow and that might assist with the realigning and the new bridge at Alonnah.

CHAIR - Given your knowledge of the area, do you think it is going to happen?

Mr BILL - I would like to think so.

CHAIR - You would find it unusual if there was not something that was suitable.

Mr BILL - Yes.

CHAIR - I know these are very extensive submissions, Keith, but I know there are parts of them that you would want to identify to the committee.

Mr BILL - I would like to make a broad overview and address it in a nutshell. The question of transport has both economic and social issues. I have attempted to bring out the primary producers aspect of the economic issues because it is critical. The moneys gained from primary industry on Bruny are quite substantial. In the report there is probably in the vicinity of 2 000-2 500 head of cattle on the island, in the vicinity of 20 000-25 000 sheep, there are 13 oyster leases, so the primary produce is relevant. You have the big cherry orchard, Lennonville, up at North Bruny. As you drive down you can see we have new berry fruits - they have only been here the last two years. We now have a cheese factory going, and vineyards. The primary produce is working and expanding. That is the economic part of the island transport.

CHAIR - We have heard in evidence that it could expand more if people knew they were able to take up some of the opportunities to get their produce off the island and get people onto the island.

Mr BILL - I believe that is true. The social impact, I think, is a different issue again. I am not quite sure who you have spoken to previously, but from Tourism Tasmania there is a degree of negativity about tourists towards Bruny Island. I think the reason for that is what I have indicated previously. The story is the mother who has just come back from the supermarket, has crying kids in the back of the car, the icecream is melting and she cannot get back on the island. The explanation for that is that in winter it is okay when it is just the locals and when the tourist pressure comes on the ferry - because of the inadequacy of the service over the summer period, the social impact is fairly dramatic in some instances.

CHAIR - Can I ask you about the environmental levy?

Mr BILL - That is something we have been discussing for the last few years. I believe within the State Government there is a reluctance to impose another tax, although the benefit of this fee would be an asset to the island. The benefit for that is that if Kingborough Council were to know there were x number of visitors coming onto the island there are x number of fees. Bill suggested two to five dollars. I think that what we are discussing at the moment is just a fee without trying to strike a number so it is a number in someone's head. If we can sort of work through, let us make it happen and then we will talk about a dollar figure.

CHAIR - 63 000 people.

Mr BILL - That's right. So, the answer to that is, if Kingborough Council know that there is a levy coming then they can then say, 'All right, we will spend half a million dollars or a million dollars on Bruny Island, knowing that the money will come back in the next four or five years or whatever it might be.' So, if they know it is going to happen then the moneys can come forward.

One of the other things that I will just briefly touch on is that in the submission it is noted that, unlike Flinders Island and King Island, we do not have our own council. There are 600 people on the island, out of 32 000 in the Kingborough Municipality. We must vie for every cent we can get out of Kingborough Council, so there is a discrepancy there in so far as we are talking about island transport, road structure and what Kingborough can provide for our roads, et cetera. We are competing with the rest of the 32 000 people in Kingborough. So there is an anomaly there.

I would also like to make a comment on the question that was asked previously about Dennes Point and about movement of traffic from Dennes Point to Hobart. There are a few issues there. Firstly, at the Dennes Point area itself there is an inadequacy of car parking facilities. The other comment that I make is along the same lines and this is something that I have knowledge of; in Port Phillip Bay there was a nearly identical scenario where there was a daily run of a vessel that left from Rosebud, went to Port Arlington and went to Melbourne. That service, I think, lasted nearly 12 months before it went under. The reason for that was, in the first instance there was an expression of interest from patrons and to a degree it had some novelty value. There was inadequate

car parking at Rosebud and there was no car parking at the other end which was Station Pier and once you got to Station Pier you had to get on a tram to go to the city, come back with your bags and all that sort of thing.

I can understand that it might be of interest to some people, but you still have to drive to Dennes Point, you have still got to get off at whatever wharf it is going to be at Hobart. I think the comment was made that it could be used by people with doctors' appointments. The people with doctors' appointments on Bruny Island are elderly people and I do not think they really want to get off at Hobart at the wharf and then walk up to wherever the doctor's surgery is.

CHAIR - There was talk of a Red Cross car collecting people.

Mr BILL - Was there?

CHAIR - I am not sure what your view is on that. It was just one point that was made.

Mr BILL - That could be a good idea, but I think that would probably need a fair bit of market research to see who was going to use it, what the costs will be, et cetera.

For tourists coming to the island, again, if they are to come to Dennes Point what happens with them when they get there? There is no public transport on the island. An arrangement would have to be made for a bus or something.

CHAIR - One bus tour operator; is that correct, to shuttle people?

Mr BILL - Well, that cannot happen because the buses that are on the island are locked into the movement of children to and from the schools. So, for a bus operator, it would have to be out of school hours; there are certain things that would have to happen in that area. While we are on that issue, there have been many examples of tourists who got on as foot passengers at Kettering, came off at Robert's Point and said, 'Where's the bus stop? How do I get to where I'm going?' So, they have gone back on the next ferry because there was no bus. There needs to be an awareness for tourists and particularly backpackers who think, 'I'll get on the ferry; this is good, it hasn't cost anything and at the other end I'll get on a bus and go somewhere, but then there is no bus.'

Mr HARRISS - Just to build on that then, Keith, you are obviously aware of the contention by the promoters of such a facility, a foot ferry, that some market research has been done and there has been some interest expressed by an operator or a couple of operators provided it could be firmed up. If a private operator was prepared to give it a whirl and it was commercially viable and the support structures on this end were available and it could be an enhanced tourism experience for people straight out of Hobart and back to their hotel in Hobart, clearly I reckon first of all your accommodation providers here on the island would prefer to have somebody stay on the island anyway.

Mr BILL - Absolutely.

Mr HARRISS - But notwithstanding that, if people were given the opportunity to visit the island, contribute to the economy of the island and in so doing congestion on the ferry

was alleviated by a presumption that they are not travelling down the Channel with a hire car and zipping off to the island, is it something worth pursuing?

Mr BILL - I think it stems from your statement - if it is commercially viable, the answer is yes, absolutely. 'Commercially viable' I think are the two significant words.

Mr HARRISS - And that would be for somebody else to determine after their market research, wouldn't it?

Mr BILL - Yes.

Mr HARRISS - The suggestion there clearly arises because Dennes Point is the closest part of the island to mainland Tasmania, so zip down from Hobart and stop at Dennes Point, and yet to race around the corner to either Barnes Bay or Roberts Point is probably going to take less time in a ferry than it would in a bus?

Mr BILL - I can comment on that if you would like me to, Paul, insofar as for our emergency evacuations - and this is when the police launch comes down and the helicopter is not required - it always goes to Roberts Point. The reason for that is weather conditions. Dennes Point is not always conducive for the receiving and discharging of passengers.

Mr HARRISS - It is exposed to north westerlies.

Mr BILL - It is. That is why straightaway all emergency evacuation by the police launch is at Roberts Point.

CHAIR - So you might need more infrastructure at Dennes Point to cater for wet weather or whatever conditions that are not conducive to standing out and waiting?

Mr BILL - Yes. Just one example again, the structure at Dennes Point - and I think there is a photo in one of my submissions there - is a new structure. Regarding the old structure, which was very good, the *Cartela* used to come down. That structure that has now gone up just will not take the *Cartela*. Again, what needs to happen - and this would be part of what I believe you are discussing - is knowing the size of the craft, the weight of the craft and then knowing the jetty so it just would not be, 'Here's a vessel, let's come down and use the jetty', you would need to know the vessel that is coming down.

CHAIR - It has been suggested that it would only be in the vicinity of \$3 000 to \$5 000 to make that jetty more conducive to vessels coming in on either side.

Mr BILL - I will not comment on the price of that.

CHAIR - And I cannot comment either, I am not an engineer. I am just relaying.

Ms FORREST - Just on that point, though, if there was a ferry that, rather than going into Dennes Point, went to Roberts Point, I suppose they would arrive at different times which means you would not have people getting off and a lot of vehicles getting off the other ferry at the same time?

Mr BILL - I can say that that is already a problem now so the answer is there will be a problem.

Ms FORREST - If they arrived at different times it would not be such a problem, would it?

Mr BILL - Because of the congestion?

Ms FORREST - Yes.

Mr BILL - The congestion is getting worse with all the people there. I indicated earlier that the marshalling area at Roberts Point does not even hold a boat load so they are already lined up the bank and already crossing double lines to go down there.