



2000

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

CHANNEL HIGHWAY—ALGONA ROAD TO MARGATE ROAD WIDENING AND SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

Presented to His Excellency the Governor pursuant to the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1914

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Mr Wing (Chairman)
Mr Harriss

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
Mr Green
Mr Hidding
Mr Kons

By Authority: Government Printer, Tasmania

To His Excellency the Honourable Sir Guy Stephen Montague Green, Companion of the Order of Australia, Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, Governor in and over the State of Tasmania and its Dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY

The Committee has investigated the following proposal:—

Channel Highway—Algona Road to Margate Road Widening and Safety Improvements

and now has the honour to present the Report to Your Excellency in accordance with the *Public Works Committee Act 1914*.

INTRODUCTION

This reference sought the approval of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works to commence road works necessary to widen and improve the operational safety of a section of the Channel Highway between a point approximately 200 metres south of the Algona Road, Channel Highway Roundabout and Margate. This description more accurately describes the limits of the project than does the title of the project.

The Committee was most concerned that as the title of the project is inaccurate it may have misled many in its implication that the Channel Highway's intersection with Algona Road and its junction with Huntingfield Avenue were included as part of the project and accordingly, open to public submissions as to their treatment. This was, of course, not the case, and the Committee had no jurisdiction over the said intersection and junction, or the section of the Channel Highway between them. Evidence in relation to this matter was heard, and appears below.

BACKGROUND

The Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources (DIER) undertook a planning study of the Channel Highway between Kingston and Huonville in the mid 90's.

This section of the Channel Highway passes through a rural environment with most of the abutting land devoted to rural enterprises, rural residential development or in some areas natural bushland. As is common in rural areas, along the highway there are small towns and villages, which provide services to the rural communities. Apart from Kingston and Huonville the largest of the towns is Margate which is located some six kilometres south of Kingston. The Planning Study concluded that there were no requirements to improve either the operational efficiency or the traffic capacity of the highway, but that a significant number of safety issues should be addressed.

The Planning Study identified that the section of the highway between Kingston and Margate, which carries the highest traffic volume, contains those projects that should be given the highest priority for implementation. The Average Annual Daily Traffic on this section of the highway varies between 8600 and 9200, with a Commercial Vehicle Content of about 4%.

NEED FOR THE PROJECT

The factors that have determined the need for this project include:

- i.) The existing road standard is not acceptable for the existing traffic volumes because of deficiencies in the sealed width. Vehicles are forced over the centre line to overtake cyclists and in some areas are forced onto the unsealed shoulder when passing oncoming large vehicles.
- ii.) There are no turning facilities at any of the junctions, which have contributed to accidents. The existing unsealed shoulder and verge have been used to pass vehicles turning at junctions.
- iii.) There is a lack of table drains, which has contributed to weakening of the pavement and increased maintenance.
- iv.) Sections of the pavement have adverse crossfall causing drainage problems on the pavement. This can result in increased water spray from vehicles, reducing visibility as well as the possibility of aquaplaning.
- v.) With the construction of subdivisions in the area the number of accesses onto the highway has increased causing many points of conflict. The closure, relocation and rationalisation of accesses will reduce the potential for accidents.
- vi.) Poor sight distance at junctions.

PLANNING STUDY

- i.) The Planning Study did not evaluate any new alignments remote from the existing highway. The alignment of the proposed Kingston Bypass was taken as given since the planning scheme has been amended to take the corridor into account and the land is substantially in DIER ownership.
- ii.) The deficiencies of the road relate primarily to the age and width of the pavement and the standard of the junctions, rather than to excessive roadside development, so a bypass of the existing road was not considered viable unless there was clear land without high costs for acquisition and construction. Very preliminary estimates were made which did not encourage any further investigation of bypass options. Also it was considered that any time savings made on this section would be lost later in many journeys if they increased congestion on the Hobart Southern Outlet.

- iii.) The option of creating a dual carriageway by construction of another carriageway alongside the existing was considered and discounted without further investigation due to the combination of high cost, social and environmental impact and excessive road standard relative to other sections of this and other highways.
- iv.) The option of undertaking serious geometric improvements to the existing alignment was also considered only in a very preliminary fashion. The cost and disturbance was likely to be high and the benefits of increased speeds and reduced travel times were expected to be off-set by reductions in road safety and increased congestion at some other points in the road network. As the geometric characteristics of the road are antagonistic to safe overtaking opportunities, the other options available were either to provide overtaking lanes or to discourage overtaking. The local, economic and environmental impact of overtaking lanes was considered to make the last option the one preferred.
- v.) Non road improvements, such as provision of park-and-ride facilities, were judged to have insufficient benefits to the road users generally and did not address the existing inadequacies of the highway
- vi.) The preferred option is to make traffic flow and movements as safe and as efficient as possible to reduce delays and to minimise the need for overtaking. It is intended that travel speeds do not rise significantly and that prime results of the improvements will be to increase safety and better accommodate buses, trucks, bicycles and junction manoeuvres

PROPOSAL

GENERAL TREATMENT

The proposed works involved in this project are described below:

- i.) Construction of sealed shoulders 1.0 metres wide and table drains over the full length of the project.
- ii.) Correct the pavement crossfall to provide appropriate super-elevation for a speed of 80km/hour and to ensure water depths on the pavement are acceptable.
- iii.) Providing turning facilities and improved sight distance at junctions.
- iv.) Close, relocate and rationalise accesses.

GEOMETRICS OF CHANNEL HIGHWAY

Horizontal and Vertical Alignment

The horizontal alignment of the existing highway is generally adequate for a design speed of 80km/h. The centre line of the existing highway has been adopted as the new centre line for the design with no changes to the horizontal alignment.

A number of vertical curves were identified as being deficient. Some of the deficiencies in these curves have been addressed by the relocation of junctions and accesses. Other deficiencies have been accepted, as improvements were not considered critical to safety. The existing vertical alignment has been adopted for the design.

Pavement Width

The basic pavement width that has been adopted in the design is 9 metres, comprising 3.0 metre lanes 1.0 metre sealed shoulders and 0.5 metre unsealed verges. In addition to the basic width, curve widening has been added where required and the verge has been widened to 1.0 metre where a guard fence is required.

As the existing centre line has been adopted as the new centre line, pavement widening on both sides of the highway will be required to obtain the design pavement width of 9 metres.

Pavement Crossfall and Pavement Surface Drainage

Some areas on the pavement have deficient crossfall and insufficient pavement surface drainage. The areas of insufficient pavement surface drainage generally coincide with areas of deficient crossfall. The design includes correcting the shape of the pavement to improve the pavement surface drainage.

JUNCTIONS

The design includes upgrading and modifying a number of junctions and accesses on the highway. The design for each of the junctions is discussed below. The junction types described below refer to the junction layouts in Austroads Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice Part 5—Intersections at Grade, Figure 5.23b and are as follows:

- Type A Right Turn—A widened sealed shoulder only on the opposite side of the highway to the side road.
- Type B Right Turn—Left side passing lane on the opposite side of the highway to the side road.
- Type C Right Turn—Dedicated right turning lane.
- Type A Left Turn—Simple left turn only.
- Type B Left Turn—Dedicated left turn deceleration lane.

Maddocks Road Junction

The existing junction of Maddocks Road with the Channel Highway is substandard as a crest in the highway immediately to the north of the junction restricts sight distance to the north. The design includes relocating the junction 30 metres south of the current position to provide sufficient sight distance to the north and upgrading to provide Type A Left Turn and Type C Right Turn facilities.

If the junction were not moved the crest to the north of the junction would need to be lowered, which would require excavation and the relocation of underground electricity services. Relocation of Maddocks Road will require property acquisition.

Rays Court Junction

The junction of Rays Court with the Channel Highway has been designed to provide both Type B Left Turn and Type B Right Turn facilities. Minor property acquisition will be required on both sides of the highway.

Golf Club Access

The Golf Club is located on two property titles with three existing accesses. These accesses are used to gain access to the car park for the clubhouse. The design includes a Type B Left Turn facility into the northern access to the car park and a Type B Right Turn facility into the southern access. The egress to the highway from the car park shall be via the southern access. The existing central access shall be closed. Minor property acquisition will be required on both sides of the highway to allow for the construction of the proposed access arrangements.

Howden Road Junction

The design of the Howden Road junction with the Channel Highway includes both Type B Left Turn and Type C Right Turn facilities. Minor property acquisition will be required on both sides of the highway.

Fehres Road Junction

The design of the Fehres Road junction with the Channel Highway includes both Type B Left Turn and Type B Right Turn facilities. Minor property acquisition will be required on both sides of the highway.

Brookfield Access

The design of the Brookfield Access onto the Channel Highway includes a Type A Right Turn facility. The existing access shall be sealed to the property boundary with no changes to existing geometry. Property acquisition is not required at this junction.

Margate Train Access

The design of the Margate Train Access junction with the Channel Highway includes both Type B Left Turn and Type A Right Turn facilities. All other accesses to the Margate Train are proposed to be closed by use of physical barriers such as earth mounds. Minor property acquisition will be required on both sides of the highway.

Margate Bowls Club Access

The design of the Margate Bowls Club Access onto the Channel Highway includes both Type B Left Turn and Type A Right Turn facilities. Minor property acquisition will be required on both sides of the highway.

Vineyard Access

The design of the Vineyard Access onto the Channel Highway includes both Type A Left Turn and Type B Right Turn facilities. Minor property acquisition will be required on both sides of the highway.

SERVICES

There will need to be some relocations of Aurora poles, Telstra cables, Council water mains and Hobart Water water mains at various locations to accommodate the widening of the pavement and the construction of turning facilities at junctions.

COSTING

GROUP	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	UNIT	RATE \$	AMOUNT \$ '000
EARTHWORKS	Clearing	1	Item	40000.00	40
	Cut	37500	m ³	8.00	300
	Fill	2000	m ³	12.00	24
	Subgrade	200	m ³	15.00	3
DRAINAGE	Pipe culverts < 600mm	90	m	250.00	22.5
	Pipe culverts > 600mm	10	m	1000.00	10
	Endwalls < 600	20	No.	600.00	12
	Endwalls > 600	2	No.	3000.00	6
	Kerb and gutter	800	m	35.00	28
	Subsoil Drains	800	m	20.00	16
PAVEMENT	Base and Subbase	20000	m ³	45.00	900
	Pavement Shape Correction	2000	m ³	50.00	100
	Pavement Repairs	1600	m ²	35.00	56
SEAL	Primerseal	13000	m ²	2.50	32.5
	Asphalt	200	tonne	160.00	32
	PMB Seal	52000	^S m ²	3.00	156
TRAFFIC	Safety Fence	2300	m	90.00	207
	Paved Islands	3	No.	1500.00	4.5
	Signs and Linemarking	1	Item	30000.00	30

GROUP	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	UNIT	RATE \$	AMOUNT \$ '000
MISCELLANEOUS	Fences	2000	m	12.00	24
	Accesses	25	No.	3000.00	75
	Landscaping	1	Item	5000.00	5
	Lighting	1	Item	15000.00	15
	Telecom Relocation Normal	1100	m	50.00	55
	Telecom Relocation Fibre Optic	300	m	120.00	36
	Aurora Relocation	55	poles	4000.00	220
	Hobart Water Main Relocation	330	m	350.00	115.5
	Council Water Main Relocation	800	m	40.00	32
	Acquisition	38000	m ²	2.00	76
MINOR ITEMS AND CONTINGENCY		10%			267
				TOTAL \$	2,900

EVIDENCE

The Committee commenced its inquiry on Friday, 28 July 2000. The Committee inspected the site of the proposal. Following such inspection, the Committee commenced hearing evidence. The following witnesses appeared, made the Statutory Declaration and were examined by the Committee in public:

- Graeme Nichols, Project Manager, Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources
- Philip Millin, Environmental Scientist
- John Pauley, Manager Land Transport Planning, Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources

DOCUMENTS RECEIVED AND TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE

1. Channel Highway Algonia Main Road to Margate. Road Widening and Safety Improvements. Submission by Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources
2. Channel Highway Planning Study Tasmania. Department of Transport.
3. Channel Highway Algonia Main Road to Margate. Road Widening and Safety Improvements. Appendix C – Preliminary Design Plans. Submission by Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources
4. Submission and petition, David Taylor. 13 July 2000.
5. Submission, Alan and Elizabeth Daly. 25 July 2000.
6. Submission, Angus Sprott and petition. 26 July 2000.
7. Submission, Paul Gregory, Treasurer Bicycling Tasmania Inc. 26 July 2000.
8. Submission, Tasmania. State Bicycle Advisory Committee. 27 July 2000.
9. Submission, D.R. Hazell, Mayor Kingborough Council. 27 July 2000.
10. Submission, Wayne Kelly and Dianne Van Harten. 27 July 2000

BACKGROUND

Mr John Pauley, Manager Land Transport Planning, briefed the Committee on the background of the project as follows:—

“... there has been a recognised history that this section of the Channel Highway is in need of upgrading. There has been an increase in traffic on the highway; there has been an increase in the amount of residential development in Margate and south of Margate ... this section was identified as an area in need of resolution ... (and) we embarked on a study process which looked at the Channel Highway from Algona Main Road all the way around to Huonville to identify where the improvements were needed and the priority for those improvements ... one of the clear priorities that came out of that study—and was agreed by all parties—was that Algona Main Road to Margate was in need of improvement. The first stage of that we saw at the end of our tour this morning—the bridge at the Margate Rivulet, where I think people would recognise there has been a vast improvement. The second stage of that is the project we have before us. The next stage of improving the road is really looking at traffic management issues within Margate itself.”

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Mr Pauly outlined to the Committee the process of consultation with the community that had been undertaken:—

“... there has been a large amount of consultation with the community over the last three or four years on this project. That consultation culminated in some calls just before or just after Christmas for a dual carriageway to be constructed instead of the proposal that we have before us. There were indications from members of the community that a dual carriageway could be constructed at a reasonably low cost. We undertook an assessment of that and, while it is technically feasible to construct a dual carriageway, the cost of a dual carriageway would be in excess of \$10 million or \$11 million. As a consequence of that we went back to the community with, I think, a round of plans that are just earlier than the ones you have before you and explained to the community what a dual carriageway would entail and the costs imposed. Also, we went through each of the plan sheets fairly closely with representatives from the Margate community and we are now at the stage where we have acceptance that these works will overcome many of the concerns that the community has and they recognise the financial constraints that we have on us and the inability at this stage to move to a dual carriageway environment.”

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to the nature and the extent of consultation, with whom such consultation had occurred and whether it had been with the Council, with management, or with affected land owners at public meetings. Mr Graeme Nichols, Project Manager responded respectively:—

“No, with technical service people (of the Council). I have a presentation in a couple of weeks’ time with the technical engineering committee as well...”

No, not as a public meeting. I haven’t been to all meetings, that would be fairly difficult, but my project designer has usually gone with the property officer so we usually send two people to consult with the landowners.”

Notwithstanding evidence to suggest that only 200 metres of the road would be closed at any one time, the Committee questioned Mr Nichols as to whether any special consultation had occurred with small businesses operating along the side of the highway, and who would potentially be negatively affected by traffic disruption resulting from the proposed works. Mr Nichols submitted:—

“No, just basically informing them about the project and the effect on their property—you know, their general property ... Fortunately there aren’t those small businesses on this section”

When questioned as to whether the train and the secondhand dealers should be formally consulted with regard to the possible impact through the construction phase in order that they have a full understanding of the impact, Mr Nichols responded in the affirmative

NEED FOR THE PROJECT

Mr Nichols elaborated upon the need for the project:—

“Vehicles per day are presently 9 500 and the existing road standard is not acceptable for these volumes because of the deficiencies in the sealed width. Vehicles are forced over the centre line to overtake cyclists and in some areas are forced onto the unsealed shoulder when passing oncoming large vehicles. The traffic growth rate is presently 5 per cent. There are no turning facilities at any of the junctions, which has contributed to accidents. The existing unsealed shoulder and verge has been used to pass turning vehicles at junctions. There is a lack of table drains which has contributed to weakening of the pavement and increased maintenance. Sections of the pavement have adverse cross-fall, causing drainage problems on the pavement. This can result in increased water spray from vehicles reducing visibility, as well as the possibility of aquaplaning.

With the construction of subdivisions in the area the number of accesses onto the highway has increased, causing many points of conflict. Closure, relocation and rationalisation of accesses will reduce the potential for accidents. There is also poor site distance at junctions.

The objective of the project is to upgrade the safety standard of the Channel Highway between Algona Main Road and Margate by the provision of sealed shoulders, improved delineation, junction upgrading and access rationalisation. The project, as we said today, starts about 200-odd metres south of Algona Main Road roundabout and finishes 150 metres south of the geological monument. The following safety improvements are planned: widening the existing pavement to provide curved widening, 1 metre sealed shoulder, unsealed verges and total drains. The sealed shoulders provide an opportunity for cyclists to travel the road in relative safety. Junction improvements—including Margaret train, upgrading of the bowls club, golf club and vineyard accesses—junctions are to be provided with turning facilities and improved sight distance. Improved signage will also be provided. ... correction of the existing pavement is proposed to remove adverse cross-fall and improved pavement drainage. Again, rationalisation and reconstruction of accesses, including safety improvements at major accesses, relocation of services, reinstate and improve table drains, improve delineation of the pavement and provisions of key bus stops at Maddocks Road, Rays Court, Howden Road and adjacent to Berko's entrance. Footpaths will be provided at Maddocks Road, Rays Court, Howden Road to improve access from the junctions to the bus bays.

There are a number of constraints applied to the project: no major realignment of the road; a speed environment of 80 kilometres per hour to be used in design—and I might just note that the existing horizontal alignments are generally adequate for a design speed of 80 kilometres per hour—existing vertical alignment to be retained; no overtaking improvements.”

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Philip Millin, Environmental Scientist, briefed the Committee on the planning approvals process and the manner in which the key environmental issues were dealt with:—

“The proposed works are entirely within the road reservation, however there have been some minor land acquisitions on adjacent properties. This land is zoned for road reservation under the Kingborough planning scheme and therefore a road is a permitted use and no planning permit is required from the Kingborough Council.

The environmental assessment that has been carried out will be passed to the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, for their information. The environmental assessments included specialist studies on the botanical values of the roadside. A faunal survey was carried out and a heritage and archaeological survey was carried out. In addition, a detailed assessment of potential impact was made from the construction and ongoing operation of the highway.

Various organisations and people were consulted, especially in relation to legislative requirements—for example, the Threatened Species Protection Act. The botanical survey, I will just run through—I'll come to the main environmental issues in the next point. The Resource Management Conservation Division of the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, was consulted and we have a letter obtained from them that they have endorsed the project.

The Threatened Species Unit was approached and an application for a permit was made for certain plant species and planning and scientific services of that department have been advised of the project. In addition to that, all adjacent landowners have been consulted, in particular Hazell Bros who are a major landowner in the area and who have provided land for some of the tree replanting that is proposed. Another party that has been consulted with is the Margate Primary School—on the field trip we inspected some replanted trees that the primary school has done in association with Greening Australia.”

ACCESSES/SPEED

The Committee questioned the witnesses regarding the access status of the highway. Mr Nichols responded:—

“It will become limited access ... it has not been declared at this stage. It will be in the next few months.”

And as to what, if any, restrictions such status would place upon that section of the highway, Mr Nichols responded :—

“That means that if you want to put in an access onto the highway you need to consult with our development section. It doesn't stop accesses but it prevents an excessive number of accesses being built and tries to minimise the number of accesses.”

Mr John Pauley, Manager Land Transport Planning, added:—

“the proclamation of limited access doesn't prohibit additional accesses. It just means that if somebody wishes to develop and have an additional access they have to have our permission. The reason for that is to ensure two things: one, the free flow of traffic along the road is maintained; and secondly, that the access is located in a safe spot. I think we saw this morning that there are a number of illegal accesses that have been constructed on the Channel Highway which have caused us some concerns and certainly reduces the safety of the road. So with limited access you remove those problems occurring in the future.

The Committee questioned the witnesses regarding the proposed speed limit for the section of the highway the subject of the inquiry. Mr Pauley responded that the limit would be 100 kilometres per hour. When questioned as to whether any assessment had been undertaken regarding a reduction of the limit to 80 kilometres per hour, given that the average speed of traffic is 85 kph, Mr Pauley continued:—

“The speed with which traffic goes along there, the 85 percentile speed is between 80 and 85 kilometres an hour. There are times during the day when traffic volumes are quite low and if you were to put an 80 kilometre speed limit in there then at all times of the day people would have to travel at 80 kilometres per hour or less.

... It would be much safer after reconstruction than it is now, particularly with the changes to junction arrangements and property accesses.”

The Committee pursued the issue of the speed limit and access to the highway as follows:—

Mr HIDDING—*It seems to be, Mr Chairman, a number of issues here that relate to the speed of the vehicles on this road—a 100k road—and it seems that there's been simply no credence given to the idea of actually lowering the speed on this road simply because the standards within your department have said, 'No, it will stay at 100'. I mean, that actually creates a certain set of circumstances along this whole job. I understand what the people from Howden are saying, that even though there is that third lane and you've got a bit of an acceleration thing you are joining traffic, many of whom are doing 110 kilometres an hour.*

Mr PAULEY—We have undertaken a full technical assessment from Margate through to Kingston on the number of accesses, the nature of those accesses and what that means against the standards and that survey, which was undertaken by our Traffic Standards Group, has indicated that 100 kilometres an hour is the appropriate speed limit. I think it's important to realise that a speed limit is exactly what that says: it is the maximum speed. It is not a minimum speed or an advisory speed, it is the maximum speed that people can travel. I think most of the time this road flows at between 75 and 85 kilometres an hour. If we were to put in an 80 kilometre an hour speed limit this road would flow at between, say, 68 and 78—

Mr HIDDING—Do you think so?

Mr PAULEY—because nobody could then exceed 80 kilometres an hour legally and so it's 85 percentile speed, which is currently up around 85 kilometres an hour, would drop down to below 80 kilometres an hour. I think what we weigh up within the department is while on the one hand there will be people who want the speed dropped, in the same way that we've had a number of discussions this morning in relation to Campbell Town, there are people who have contrary views.

CHAIRMAN—Could you tell me what is the average speed that people have travelled from the now 60 kilometre an hour limit at Campbell Town to the previous 60 kilometre an hour—

Mr PAULEY—No, I can't.

CHAIRMAN—What are the guidelines in determining matters such as this?

Mr PAULEY—The guidelines, as I understand them—and I must point out that I'm not a civil engineer, although I have had to look at this issue on behalf of queries from residents—the guidelines relate to the number of accesses along a given section of road, so how many accesses per 100 metres or as a similar standard like that, and the nature of those accesses. So a property access has a lower weighting than, say, an access like the train or the golf club where there are a lot of vehicle movements. So the standards take account of what is the frequency of traffic interacting with the free flow of traffic along the road.

CHAIRMAN—Could you remind us of the length of this project?

Mr NICHOLS—Four and a half kilometres.

CHAIRMAN—And how many accesses are there during that?

Mr PAULEY—*I don't know if someone here knows.*

CHAIRMAN—*Could somebody tell us?*

Mr NICHOLS—*There's not a huge number, is there?*

Mr MILLIN—*Under the new design?*

Mr NICHOLS—*Under the new design -*

CHAIRMAN—*But at the moment, how many?*

Mr NICHOLS—*Some of those are just farm gates that are used very, very occasionally. They are not accesses to houses.*

CHAIRMAN—*How many residences are there over that distance and how many accesses currently are onto that road?*

Mr NICHOLS—*There are quite a few residences served by roads like Rays Court and Jamiesons Road. Now I'm not quite sure how many people there are up there but—*

CHAIRMAN—*Who enter via those, you mean?*

Mr NICHOLS—*Via those roads, yes. But people whose houses access directly onto the highway, there'd be less than ten, maybe even less.*

CHAIRMAN—*So ten access points in that distance of 4.5 kilometres?*

Mr NICHOLS—*Yes.*

CHAIRMAN—*Just ten access points.*

Mr NICHOLS—*I would say less than ten going into houses.*

Mr PAULEY—If we look at the accesses, just digging into my memory, there are three or four roads that come on—there's the golf club, there's the Hazell Bros depot and the commercial alongside it and there's the train—and then if we look at direct accesses of houses, at the moment there would be four or five illegal accesses onto the road and there would be no more than ten or a dozen legal accesses from houses onto the road and then there would be a number of farm accesses, and what we're trying to do is we're removing those illegal accesses and we're also reducing the number of direct property accesses. So in fact under the proposal, whereas if we do the technical assessment now, the technical assessment says now 100 kilometres an hour would be the appropriate maximum speed signage, in the future the assessment would actually make that 100 kilometres an hour even more valid rather than less.

Mr PAULEY—Could I just make one further comment? At the public meeting I attended in Margate—I'm not sure, I think it was late last year—the issue of the speed limit was raised and, whereas there was almost unanimous agreement with a number of other issues that the community had raised, there was a distinct split within the community on the issue of a speed limit. That is one of the things that really does complicate these things. There will be those people who realise that at the moment they can travel through there at up to 100 kilometres an hour, depending on traffic conditions, so if they're coming home from town late in the evening and there's no traffic they can come through at 100 and they realise that they would have to be down at 80 and then there are those people who are proponents for the 80 kilometre an hour speed.

CHAIRMAN—Could you give us any guide as to the number of people who were at the meeting and the percentage who favoured one or the other?

Mr PAULEY—It was about 50:50 from my gauging of the meeting.

CHAIRMAN—Over approximately how many present?

Mr PAULEY—There would have been 130 or 140 people in the hall. The Margate hall was packed.

CHAIRMAN—So there's obviously a lot of interest in this project.

Mr NICHOLS—Mr Chairman, what I'd just like to add to that is that if the speed limit is set at 80, whilst there are only a couple of overtaking opportunities, setting it at 80 doesn't give you the opportunity to pass legally. You need to get up to 100 to pass people.

Mr HIDDING—That's true.

Mr PAULEY—One of the things that we haven't done here is we haven't put in any passing lanes and the reason we haven't put in any passing lanes is that it's impossible to fit any in. I've looked at that issue on two or three occasions just to see if it is and the issue of overtaking is something that often crops up.

CYCLING

The Committee received a number of submissions relating to the use of this section of the Channel Highway by cyclists. The Committee examined the witnesses in relation to these representations.

Mr HIDDING—... Cyclists are saying, 'We want two metres or, if you're going to bring it in lower, if you're going to give us a metre'. What concerns me is we are going to construct a road and say to cyclists, 'Here is something safe to cycle on. Here is another metre'. And the cyclists are actually saying to us that the standards that they are aware of is if you are going to have a metre or 1.2 metres, for instance—the lowest—the only way you can have that is to have a much lower speed limit. A metre and 100 kilometres they submit, in quite a number of their submissions, is not appropriate. I wonder whether we are not actually inviting more people onto this road with the one metre shoulder and suggesting that it is quite safe.

That's what we were talking about earlier on the bus where some situations because they are patently unsafe, there are very few accidents. But here we are reconstructing a road, giving a sense of some sense of security, actually constructing a bicycle shoulder and not considering a speed reduction.

Mr PAULEY—We are not actually constructing a bicycle lane, we are constructing a sealed shoulder to bring the carriageway up to a standard that is more appropriate with the level of vehicles that use it. That sealed shoulder serves the secondary purpose of being available for cyclists.

I think, as members would have seen this morning, if we were to essentially double the scope of works, which is what would be required to put in the two-metre sealed shoulder as the Aust Roads guidelines suggests, we would be doubling the cost of the project. Unfortunately you cannot meet all objectives; we can only try to make the road safer than it is at the moment and bring it up to a standard which is more appropriate.

CHAIRMAN—Thank you. We've had a number of submissions and one of them is from the State Bicycle Advisory Committee and they make requests—and Mr Green dealt with this— but I think their bottom line set out on the last page of their submission in paragraph 22.2 when they say: 'The absolute minimum position is (1) to increase the sealed shoulder lip by 0.5 metres to 1.5 metres to accommodate cyclists, with an appropriate envelope to protect them from the wind effect of all passing vehicles, including trucks'. I'm not quite sure what the envelope is or what that reference means and I'd like to ask what your understanding is of that and the practicality, following on from what Mr Hidding was asking, and the cost of increasing the sealed shoulder by 0.5 of 1 metre?

Mr NICHOLS—Going back to our million dollars of pavement it would be another \$500 000, plus there'd also be excavation. It would have a significant effect on excavation because on earthworks we'd have to widen for that an extra metre, so in the cuts we'd have an extra metre of cut, we'd have an extra metre to fill, we may need additional property acquisition.

Mr PAULEY—And there would also be the issue of services.

Mr NICHOLS—Yes.

CHAIRMAN—For 1 metre?

Mr NICHOLS—For half a metre on each side, yes.

CHAIRMAN—I think, having received the submission, we really need to test it and there are national guidelines for cyclists and I imagine you are aware of those and you've taken those into account in the preparation of your plan.

Mr NICHOLS—The scope of the work is to provide a wider road in accordance with our own standards. We haven't provided the 2 metre cycleway that they require—or 1.5 metres—because that wasn't one of the objectives of the project.

CHAIRMAN—But you would have had regard to those standards, would you not, in reaching the decision that you've taken as to what you recommend?

Mr NICHOLS—No, the objective of the project was to seal a 1 metre shoulder to provide an 8 metre carriageway.

Mr PAULEY—Perhaps if we take a step back, I think your question related to what would be the costs involved with increasing the scope of works by 50 per cent, because that's essentially what it would be.

CHAIRMAN—By 50 per cent?

Mr PAULEY—By 50 per cent, because at the moment our scope of works along this section of road is to undertake shoulder widening, shoulder strengthening and shoulder sealing 1 metre either side of the road. At the moment we have \$300 000 worth of earthworks. You could say that that would increase, perhaps not by 50 per cent, but certainly by somewhere around a third because you've got to undertake that extra width.

We've got pavement construction of a million dollars. You would almost certainly say that we would have to have 50 per cent more pavement construction because it's a direct linear relationship. In terms of sealing, again you would have an increase of 50 per cent because sealing is simply a matter of the number of square metres that you are sealing, and so, if we add that up, you've got \$500 000, \$600 000, \$700 000. If we were trying to undertake these works within the road reserve that currently exists we may need to undertake additional safety fencing because there might be objects which at the moment are within that outside the zone that we've got to protect that come within the zone because that zone is from the edge of the seal. There may be additional services relocation because there may be areas where we are currently doing excavations that are within the current services that may impact on services. So on that basis the costs of providing for an extra half a metre shoulder on either side we could surmise, without going back and doing the detailed investigations, would be of the order of \$750 000 as a minimum.

The second issue, I think, relates to the fact that we are not building a cycle lane. In places like Cooeee, in places like the west Tamar, there is a very heavy utilisation of the road by cyclists for training purposes et cetera. So in those instances we explicitly take account of the fact that there needs to be a cycle lane. In this instance there is occasional use by cyclists. Sure, if we put a cycle lane in there there might be more use by cyclists but we recognise that there is occasional use of the road by cyclists and so, in undertaking these works and in proposing these works, we are cognisant of the fact that the department has on record numerous correspondence from cyclists and cycling organisations identifying the dangers in terms of the drop off and interacting with traffic. We have proposed here works that would accommodate and significantly improve the safety for anyone who wishes to use that length of road safely. In the same way that on Sunday mornings when I go for a cycle ride I come up the Southern Outlet, I come up the Southern Outlet the whole way in the sealed shoulder. There isn't a cycling lane there for me but being in the sealed shoulder offers you a huge increase in safety over being in the travelling lane. It also offers a huge benefit to cars because the cars are not having to slow down continually for cyclists. So,

yes, one could surmise that we should put a 1.5 metre or a 1.8 metre sealed shoulder and call it a cycling lane; alternatively, what we have done is we have tried to identify the maximum improvements that we can deliver within a budgetary constraint and within the constraint of operating within the current road reserve.

CHAIRMAN—I appreciate what you are saying and I recognise the relevance of that. To what extent, if at all, did you take into account the interests of cyclists in preparing these plans?

Mr PAULEY—Certainly from my perspective in planning, when we were doing the planning studies we recognised that there was recreational cycling and some limited commuter cycling. Our concept was to permit that to be accommodated more safely, not to provide a cycle lane but permit it to be accommodated more safely. It really does become a trade-off in terms of what we can deliver and what it does cost.

CHAIRMAN—In a submission made by Wayne Kelly and Diane Van Harten, in clause 3 they say: 'Please consider the needs of cyclists when designing turning facilities at intersections. Traffic islands which block road shoulders near the gutter and force cyclists out into a traffic stream in the road lane are extremely dangerous for the cyclists'. Could you perhaps apply what they are saying to your plans and tell us whether that has been accommodated?

Mr NICHOLS—I have a slightly more advanced plan here that does show the Howden Road junction. The running lane is this one here—I apologise for these plans; they are working drawings rather than -

Mr GREEN—Believe me, they are very detailed plans.

Mr NICHOLS—The ... islands are placed back from that edge line to enable the cyclist to go through.

CHAIRMAN—Which page is this—or can you lead us onto that?

Mr NICHOLS—It is actually sheet 31 in this set—chainage 5200 of 5150.

CHAIRMAN—Do we have a copy of that?

Mr NICHOLS—No, these have just been published. They are draft tender documents and I am not sure that it would necessarily be appropriate for them to be widespread because it would give a tenderer perhaps -

CHAIRMAN—5500, is it?

Mr PAULEY—5200. It's where Howden Road comes in.

Mr NICHOLS—You can see the same detail there where points (c), (b) and (e) are clear. In fact (b) has been moved back on my plan—it gives a bit more space there. (b) and (c) look a bit tighter on that plan than on the final plan. So that is what they are talking about. What they don't like is the cyclists coming down here—this is the left turn slot, so they will be quite safe in there—and then come through here and find this is a pinch point and they have to go out. My plan shows quite a bit more room there. That does look a bit tight on your plan but it has been moved back.

CHAIRMAN—So are you able to accommodate that concern in the final plans/

Mr PAULEY—Yes, certainly. I think that is a concern that we should take on board and it can be accommodated.

CHAIRMAN—And you are intending to do that, are you?

Mr NICHOLS—Yes. I think our standard drawings have been modified to take that on board anyway. Milan Prodenavic, who is from the Road Standards Branch and is a member of the cycling committee -

CHAIRMAN—So you will do that not only in relation to that junction but in relation to each other similar situation, will you?

Mr PAULEY—Wherever there are islands similar to that.

ROAD VERGES

The Committee sought a response to the submission of the Kingborough Council, which raised, *inter alia*, the issue of the maintenance responsibility of the road verges. The submission stated that "Currently the DIER is responsible for the verges from Algona Road to Margate because there are no footpaths adjacent to the road. The new work does include short sections of footpath adjacent to the bus bays. Technically, council would then become responsible for the road verges adjacent to these short footpath sections spread along the road. It is council's proposal that the DIER continues to maintain all the road verges from Algona Road to Margate due to the difficulty in identifying responsibility sections and their short relative length in the overall project". The following exchange took place:—

Mr PAULEY—*I think council have highlighted a very valid concern. Under the agreements that there are between DIER and councils, it's not where there's a footpath, it's wherever there is a kerb. Where there is a kerb the department has responsibility only for an area 3.5 metres or thereabouts from the centre line and the remainder is the responsibility of council and I think there was recently an issue in the west Tamar area. We went through and sealed the West Tamar Highway and we only did our bit and you've also seen it in Campbell Town where we've sealed the centre bit. I think in relation to this that we would maintain our responsibility for the total road reserve and not be seeking to have council take responsibility of those bits and pieces along where we've put in kerb and guttering for other reasons.*

Mr NICHOLS—*It's mainly meant to be in urban areas that that applies to, but we use kerb and gutter extensively in rural areas too where we have difficult cuts. We just can't open them out for a total drain which would add on 2 metres plus with the extra cutting. If we use a kerb and gutter we still accept responsibility for that for outside the pavement.*

Mr PAULEY—*But I think it's a technical point that needs to be addressed by the department and we perhaps need to respond to council confirming that we would maintain the maintenance of the verge.*

CHAIRMAN—*So are you prepared to do that and when?*

Mr PAULEY—*I notice Graeme is writing it down and I would imagine it would be done almost immediately.*

Mr NICHOLS—*Yes. I mentioned before a meeting with council in a couple of weeks' time and I guess that probably would be a good time to talk about that further. They have already raised it with me but I haven't received a letter at this stage but I will respond to it.*

DEFINITION OF WORKS

The Committee questioned the witnesses regarding the definition of the project, and in particular non inclusion of the Algona Road and Huntingfield Avenue intersections with the Channel Highway. Mr Pauley submitted that "It's colloquially referred to as Algona Main Road to Margate but the actual precise locations are some 200 metres south of the Algona Main Road".

The Committee sought an explanation from the witnesses as to why the Huntingfield estate access was not considered for inclusion in the project, given its obvious connection, and asked what, if any, remedial works of a minor nature could be applied to improve the Huntingfeild intersection. Mr Nichols responded, "I don't think there is a cheap solution to that junction".

Mr Pauley added:—

“The difficulty with Huntingfield is that because of the way the development has been approved within the Huntingfield area by council permitting the retail development—the call centre—we have had a major traffic generator. I would imagine—and I’d be very surprised if this wasn’t the case—that as each of those developments have proceeded the department would have been making more requests through the planning system for the appropriate traffic impact statements to be made, undertaken and those calls have ... fallen on deaf ears. The long-term solution to that is actually tied up with the alignment of the Kingston bypass which would move the roundabout 200 metres or so to the west and at which stage you could actually either construct a five-legged roundabout in that location or bring Huntingfield Avenue on at a location and then have the roundabout. To do an interim solution where the actual road is would be very expensive and very difficult to actually engineer. It’s not a trivial location to do that.”

The Committee sought evidence as to when the project was defined so as to exclude the Huntingfield intersection and what effect that had had in relation to public consultation with the people who live and work within the estate.

Mr Pauley submitted:—

“During the Channel Highway study it looked at the total Channel Highway and the issue of access into Huntingfield was a project that was identified. Another project that was identified in that process was improving the Channel Highway between Algona Main Road and Margate. During the process of determining the priorities, and that is a process which was undertaken with strong consultation with the community, this project that we are considering today was elevated in priority above the access to Huntingfield as a separate project. So it was back at that stage that the two projects were disconnected so that the prioritisation didn’t confuse what are essentially two different issues: one is an issue with an access into a subdivision and one is the issue of providing an improved link to a town.”

The issue was pursued:—

Mr HIDDING—... Now I want to talk about the possibility of relinking the two issues—this business of just separating them out and saying, ‘Well, that’s that project and therefore it’s got absolutely nothing to do with that project’ I’m not sure is technically sound from a planning point of view.

From a planning point of view you probably got them all as one major project and this is the one just lifted out of the middle. However, there is a strong feeling from a number of the major investors in that Huntingfield area—people who have invested millions—that there ought to be, as a part of this job, at least a design undertaken for some interim works to resolve that issue prior to this ten-year—the major fix that's going to take place in a period of time. The reason I want to sustain that argument is that we're putting in a big new road, a widened road and upgraded accesses and all that kind of thing—and it's got a 100k limit on it—and you haven't convinced me that because there's a 100k limit on it they're still going to be driving at 85 kilometres an hour, I think with a better road, a wider road and all that I think people are going to be driving at 100 or 110, and probably attracting even more traffic as the council hopes, there's going to be a heck of a lot of cars barrelling down that highway towards a very poor intersection into a main development.

Mr NICHOLS—*But they are slowing down because right next door there are roundabouts.*

Mr HIDDING—*Yes, they would already be slowing to a degree.*

Mr PAULEY—*They are slowing down for a number of reasons. First of all, the 80k zone starts south of the Huntingfield intersection and I think it is a couple of hundred metres, from my recollection this morning when I was driving the bus—I didn't want to get booked driving a bunch of eminent people around—so they are slowing down for the 80k zone for the Huntingfield turnoff and for the roundabout. The second point is: whatever we do we can't look at the Huntingfield access in isolation of the total development that is taking place within Huntingfield and the other roads in the vicinity. Separate to this project there is a process which is being undertaken with council, with ourselves and with the major landowner in Huntingfield—the Department of Health and Human Services—to actually look at what is the future of Huntingfield and accesses to it. We have identified a location on Algona Main Road which would provide an alternative access into Huntingfield safely. There is only one location that is safe. There is another location further along Algona Main Road where there is already an intersection -*

Mr HIDDING—*So you'd close off the one on the Channel Highway?*

Mr PAULEY—No, you would keep the one on the Channel Highway but you would give an alternative and more direct access to parts of the industrial estate and perhaps also to the call centre. The difficulty with all this is encouraging council, who are the planning authority in the area, to improve the internal roadways within the industrial estate such that you can get access in there. At the moment the developer of the industrial estate is doing it in a piecemeal fashion; they are doing a block at a time. I think if you go back and look at the original designs for the internal roadway there have already been a number of internal roadways that have been taken out. But we are looking at the issue of Huntingfield; we are working with council to look at how that works. I think we discussed this over lunch because we suspected there may be some additional questions on it. Really, to actually do anything in the Huntingfield location would cost a lot of dollars because of the nature of it. You could be looking in excess of \$1 million to \$1.5 million there.

Mr HIDDING—Would that be too much for a government to consider, given that the next best thing is ten years away?

Mr PAULEY—Well, it comes back to, I think we have to consider that option. We have to look at what is the option with another access into Huntingfield and what the impacts of that are. As I said, those discussions—although they are proceeding slowly and they are dependent on a whole range of decisions that may be made—is something. Certainly from my perspective, now that the Huntingfield issue has been raised since we undertook the study and, in determining subsequent priorities for improvement works on the Channel Highway, we have to now put that Huntingfield issue back into the melting pot. So whereas the study left it out of the melting pot and we have gone ahead with the highest priority project, the future work has to take account of that issue.”

RAYS COURT

The Committee questioned the witnesses in relation to a submission received from Allan and Elizabeth Daley who submitted “We argue placement of proposed bus stops close to but on the Kingston side of Rays Court is unsafe, particularly if the speed limit is to remain at 100 kilometres per hour”. The witnesses responded:—

Mr NICHOLS—We have consulted with our Traffic Standards Branch on this issue and they want to maintain the 100 limit to Longley and along the highway. I don't think you could do it piecemeal though, you couldn't have small sections that are 80.

Mr PAULEY—If you tried to have more than a continuous zone you would end up with a very discontinuous speed environment.

Mr MILLIN—At the bus shelters there are pedestrian warning signs on the sides of the roads. ... On the approaches to those places.

Mr PAULEY—Particularly for school buses, we've got warning signs on the back of the bus that it is going to actually stop and pull off the road."

ROSLYN AVENUE/HOWDEN ROAD

The Committee sought a response from the witnesses to the submission of Mr David Taylor, and petitioners requesting that the speed limit on lower Roslyn Avenue be reduced to 40 kilometres per hour to reduce the risk to residents using their driveways and who suggested that ways and means be investigated to discourage through traffic from Roslyn Avenue. The following evidence was given:—

Mr PAULEY—Roslyn Avenue, if you go down the Southern Outlet and you take the turn-off into Kingston and you come to the traffic lights down near the hotel, Roslyn Avenue travels from there down to Blackmans Bay, so it's an area that's totally unrelated to this particular project.

Mr HARRISS—Mr Chairman, just to get that in context, if I might. The basis of that submission was that Algona Road was intended to divert traffic from Blackmans Bay out onto the Channel Highway and these residents were complaining about the fact that everybody's still coming down through Roslyn Avenue. There's next to no sight distances before you hit Beach Road and all of that kind of stuff. It is unrelated to this project but what they were doing was pleading with this committee to try to influence your design such that somehow we can encourage traffic from Blackmans Bay to use Algona Road, which we clearly can't do through this process, I wouldn't have thought.

Mr PAULEY—And I think Roslyn Avenue is a local road and so—

Mr NICHOLS—It was a Public Works department road years ago but we've had it for a long time.

Mr PAULEY—But I think it's an issue that council, if council wanted its residents to come back onto the Channel Highway, it could undertake that activity independent of us, and there are a number of schools along Roslyn Avenue as well."

In this exchange, Mr Harriss expressed what is the Committee's view, that the area in question is not included in the current project.

Mr Taylor's submission in respect to the proposal for a roundabout at the Channel Highway/Howden Road intersection in order that Howden traffic can more easily enter the Channel Highway to proceed northwards to Hobart was put to the witnesses, who responded:—

***Mr NICHOLS**—I guess we haven't looked at providing a roundabout. We actually come under a lot of flack these days from the truckies because we're providing a lot of roundabouts which they find hard to negotiate and for that reason we didn't proceed with the one at Longford junction, you might remember. We have provided a speed camera there to try to control the speed limit of the traffic. So I guess that this upgrade of the junction will satisfy the traffic demands without going that far.*

***Mr PAULEY**—There are a lot of improvements taking place at Howden Road junction and, while people often go from a through-road type environment with no traffic management and no lane marking, they often jump straight to a roundabout. What we are doing at Howden Road is there will be both a right-turn lane for traffic coming from the south turning into Howden Road so that they can hold there and not hold traffic up coming behind them but also to the north—if you look on the plan 5200, you will notice that there is between 5200 and 5100 there is a section there where we do have three lanes of width which provides again a little bit of an acceleration lane for people coming out of Howden junction before they have to interact with traffic using the Channel Highway. So there are quite a number of improvements at that location and they are really not that dissimilar from the type of T-junction arrangement that we have recently done at Longford which has proved very successful as opposed to putting a roundabout in.*

Mr Taylor's submission was the only evidence received which contained any proposal for a roundabout at this junction. Given the response of the Department as detailed above, the Committee believes that in view of the public consultation that the Department has engaged in, the improvements detailed in the plans and specifications will greatly improve the junction and satisfy the traffic demands for the foreseeable future.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The Committee noted that, notwithstanding the title of the project being Channel Highway—Algona Road to Margate Road Widening and Safety Improvements, the project presented actually proposed works to commence at a point approximately two hundred metres south of the western end of the Algona Rd / Channel Highway roundabout, thereby avoiding any consideration by the Committee of the technical limitations of the existing Huntingfield Avenue intersection with the Channel Highway.

Accordingly, the Committee expresses its deep concern over the serious potential danger existing between the Channel Highway's intersection with Algona Road and the commencement of the project, some 200 metres south.

The objective of the project is to upgrade the safety standard of the relevant section of the Channel Highway by the provision of sealed shoulders, improved delineation, junction upgrading and access rationalisation. The evidence presented to the Committee clearly demonstrated the need for these improvements to proceed.

Accordingly, the Committee recommends the project, in accordance with the plans and specifications submitted, at an estimated total cost of \$2 900 000.

**Parliament House
HOBART
22 August 2000**

**Hon Don Wing M.L.C.
CHAIRMAN**