

**THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET IN THE LONG ROOM, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART, ON THURSDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2009.**

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**SORELL LINK ROAD**

**Mr LEON ASHLIN**, PROJECT MANAGER, DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE, **Mr DAVID ROLPH**, GHD, AND **Mr KEITH MIDSON**, CONSULTANT, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** (Mr Hall) - I would like to welcome everybody to the hearings this afternoon. The proponents will give their evidence first and then we will ask community people then to submit their evidence.

I might remind people that the charter of this committee is to deal with the matters at hand, that is the project that we have in front of us. It is not to deal with by-passes or any other issues in that respect. This committee only has jurisdiction to accept or reject the project. I wanted to make that clear in the first place.

I invite the department to speak to your submission.

**Mr MIDSON** - Thank you. I was involved in this project at a very early stage. I was commissioned by the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources through GHD, my former employer, to undertake traffic modelling of the entire Sorell area. This was to provide an understanding of the traffic flows in and around Sorell, to have a better understanding of the issues as they stand from a traffic point of view and to identify any potential solutions that may overcome the issues that are identified.

Quite a number of the options were tested. These included do nothing and do minimal approaches, so what would happen with forecast future land use and the associated traffic generation if things stay as they are, or if minimal changes were undertaken such as clearways, changes to the traffic light phasing and the like, right through to connecting the link road - which is the proposal subject to this hearing today - along with a few other key changes as well. There are also some variations in those themes.

Essentially, what was used was a traffic modelling software called Paramics, which is micro-simulation software, which models the interactions of individual vehicles. This is calibrated and validated for base conditions to what is on the roads now and that was confirmed through fairly extensive surveys - origin-destinations surveys, turning movement surveys, traffic volume surveys, travel times surveys. It was all very thorough in the assessment of the base conditions.

We then added what we know is likely to happen with future land use to try to determine what may happen into the future. We then modified the road network to try to make improvements to those. In terms of the project that is under review at the moment, that is the link road, what we deemed the best solution to make that work effectively was a roundabout on Tasman Highway - is it Tasman Highway at that point?

**Mr ASHLIN** - Yes.

**Mr MIDSON** - As well as a roundabout on Arthur Highway to connect those through plus a small roundabout at Fitzroy Street and various traffic management changes along the route. The idea behind that is first, to encourage people to use that route more effectively to take the load off the main street; and second, to provide a better traffic-calmed situation - you have a very busy commercial area, a lot of pedestrians, a lot of car parking - and the installation of roundabouts is very good at reducing vehicle speeds. It also tries to reduce some of the traffic volume on those roads.

We found through the modelling that a combination of traffic management works; it did take some of the traffic off the main road, which was part of the issue. At this stage we have extensive queuing on Tasman Highway, which can, at times, tail back to the causeway. That has been the trigger, if you like, for many complaints by the public to both the council and the State Government. We found that this set of works reduced the queuing by providing a much smoother traffic flow arrangement and splitting the traffic through the busy section of Sorell, giving a viable alternative to that.

It had some other benefits in providing better traffic flow out of - sorry, I am forgetting street names today -

**Mr ASHLIN** - Weston Hill Road.

**Mr MIDSON** - Weston Hill Road, and also allowed for future commercial and residential growth in that area for some time into the future.

The downside to this is that the increased traffic on Pelham Street does have an amenity impact on the residents and some of the industries along that route. However, measures such as footpath improvements and car parking improvements can go some way to fixing those, but the increased traffic can be perceived by some as having a negative impact on their amenity.

Probably that is the heart of the project and I am quite happy to answer questions about the detail, if you like.

**Mr BEST** - My understanding is that the route was one that had been discussed at local council level? Is that correct?

**Mr MIDSON** - It was, yes.

**Mr BEST** - Was that where the recommendation emanated regarding the investigations?

**Mr MIDSON** - I guess at a very early stage we were looking at all options, and that included the two main bypass options that have been around for quite some time. They were discounted very early by DIER and council because of the high cost associated with them. Whilst there are benefits, they remove a lot of traffic through Sorell, the cost of providing it outweighs the benefits. We were looking for alternative solutions and we started with trying to fix what was there currently, fixing the traffic signals and the staggered T-junction arrangement and the traffic lights at the end of the highway. We

couldn't really get those to have any real benefits that would fix things in the longer term. That route was suggested fairly early on and we tested it quite extensively with a number of different variations along the way. That seemed to give the best benefit cost. The benefits that you achieve in terms of travel time savings, delays and those sorts of things, particularly in the peak hours, was quite substantial for minimal works.

**Mr BEST** - When you say 'testing', would that include estimates of what the existing traffic count would be, how that would change, what the configurations of the traffic might be and that sort of thing?

**Mr MIDSON** - Yes. The future traffic reduction varied between 25 per cent and 45 per cent on the Tasman Highway. So we are reducing that volume of traffic and displacing it onto the Pelham Street arrangement. You get quite a substantial increase on Pelham Street in percentage terms. The volume itself is within the capacity of that street but because of very low traffic volumes there at the moment I guess that is the amenity issue. It removed enough traffic from the Tasman Highway and Arthur Highway intersections to relieve the congestion at that point.

**Mr BEST** - How does that then overlap with Australian standards for a category 3 road?

**Mr MIDSON** - It meets all the standards. They currently do anyway; it is simply the congestion issue - the delays caused during peak times because of that intersection. Most of the issues in Sorell, from a traffic flow point of view, stem from that one intersection. It is really about trying to get vehicles away from that intersection as best you can. Everything has been designed within the Australian standards and the traffic flow as such is still well within the parameters of what DIER would classify in their road hierarchy.

**Mr BEST** - So currently when we look at Forcett Street, Parsonage Place and Pelham Street - would that be category 4?

**Mr MIDSON** - I don't have the hierarchy map with me.

**Mr ASHLIN** - It is a council road.

**Mr BEST** - So it may not even be category 4?

**Mr ASHLIN** - No.

**Mr BEST** - But the design features that you are proposing would take it to category 3 standard?

**Mr MIDSON** - The link road itself or -

**Mr BEST** - Forcett, Parsonage and Pelham.

**Mr MIDSON** - It would fit more with category 4 or perhaps category 5. I think you would be looking at a daily traffic volume of around 4 000-5 000 a day. That is looking at the peak hour volumes and factoring that up. That is nowhere near some of the DIER hierarchy categories. Tasman Highway currently west of Penna Road is 13 800 vehicles

per day; Arthur Highway east of Tasman Highway is around 10 000 vehicles a day. We are taking some of that traffic off those roads at that point.

**Mr BEST** - We heard today from people concerned about people living in Forcett Street, Parsonage Place and Pelham Street, so is the proposed new category of the road and the design features that you have presented within the Australian standards?

**Mr MIDSON** - The road widths, path widths, kerb and gutter all that type of thing, yes.

**Mr BEST** - You mentioned that some options had been canvassed by the council and had been put to DIER, there had been some discussion and this had come about because it was deemed to be the most effective given the high cost of things that have been presented. I am assuming there has been a level of consultation. Has the department, for example, mailed out or put plans up on display for the public?

**Mr ROLPH** - When the development application was put in there were public display plans similar to this one I have in front of me on display in the council chambers for the two-week advertising period.

**Mr BEST** - When would that have been roughly, just as an estimate?

**Mr ASHLIN** - This was August. The DA went in at the beginning of August I believe, or even the end of July. We were recommended and approved on 19 August 2008.

**Mr GREEN** - You mentioned queuing at morning and evening, particularly evening, coming into Sorell. Is there any likelihood that those queues will extend, even with the addition of the link, back to the roundabout, backed up through Gordon Street?

**Mr MIDSON** - I do not believe so. There is a table in here that talks about queuing - on page 30 in the traffic management study. The do-nothing scenario results in a queue of about two kilometres long and that is extending from the Gordon Street/Cole Street/Station Lane intersection. Doing a minimum reduces that by nearly a quarter so it goes to 565 metres and both of the link road options reduce that to 42 metres, quite a substantial decrease. That is on the Gordon Street approach.

**Mr GREEN** - Between that intersection with Station Lane back to the roundabout is a relatively short distance if there is a red light there.

**Mr MIDSON** - There is a small reduction. It goes from 42 metres to 35 metres and the east approach is 35 to 28 metres. A small reduction but certainly it is a reduction so that does have a positive impact on that as well. The main reduction is the Gordon Street approach.

**Mr GREEN** - We heard on site that there was a need to alter Pelham Street to ensure that it lined up with Weston Hill Road. Can you explain to the committee why?

**Mr ASHLIN** - They are slightly offset by about 10 or 15 metres. To get the alignment right so they both come into the centre of the roundabout we have to push that over, which means acquiring that property on the corner - owned by Mr Kessarios. There was another argument about using traffic lights for that and we talked about that this morning,

but whether we use traffic lights or a roundabout we do still have to purchase that property to get that alignment right. We cannot have one offset like we have at Station Lane and Gordon Street because it throws them right out.

**Mr GREEN** - With respect to the purchase of the property, is that being negotiated through DIER?

**Mr ASHLIN** - We have gone through an acquisition process through DIER and we have gone through the Valuer-General. He has given us a price, which has been passed on to Mr Kessarios. We asked him to get an independent valuation as well and come back to us so we can negotiate in between. I do not know if that has happened. I have not discussed this with Mr Tomlin upstairs. I went looking for him this morning so I could discuss that but I do not know. Mr Kessarios seems very upset that we are acquiring his land and he seems quite stubborn about moving out as well, and that is quite understandable. Mr Kessarios has also asked us if we can purchase half that land, knock the house down, so that he could have access to the back part of that land. Access to that land is on the southern side of his property where there is an existing garage but it makes it very difficult for our proposal to work with an access just when you are coming around the corner of a roundabout and trying to speed up, and there could be a driveway there where someone is backing out again. We would like to purchase the lot because we do not see it as being viable to anybody else.

**Mr GREEN** - Can you remember when the valuation was made of the home?

**Mr ASHLIN** - I am guessing it would be late last year. It could be even earlier, mid to late last year.

**Mr GREEN** - With respect to parking in the various streets, we talked about the fact that the bowls club has angular parking at the moment, as does the tennis club. Can those clubs be assured that there will be a similar number of parks available for them adjacent to their club?

**Mr ASHLIN** - We said to the tennis club that they would probably lose one to two parking spots overall with the parallel parking out the front but the other problem is that their parking is further away from the tennis club - we are talking 100 metres here - which is not in front of the tennis club as they are used to, and this happens with the bowls club, too. I think they lose two to three parking spots all up but in Somerville Street they have parking right behind the bowls club where they can get off the road and they can also park in Somerville Street. I do not know if the tennis runs at the same time as the bowls but they can park on the other side of the road and we give them pedestrian access across there with much better facilities than they have had before.

**Mr GREEN** - What will the speed limit on the road be?

**Mr ASHLIN** - The speed limit will be limited to 50, as per any other council street except main roads.

**Mr GREEN** - That quite sharp corner -

**Mr ASHLIN** - The Forcett Street/Parsonage Place corner?

**Mr GREEN** - Yes.

**Mr ASHLIN** - That is where there will be signs up recommending 25 kph and also warning that trucks are entering because of Mr McGinniss's' business on the corner there. We have discussed painting a white line around that corner as well to separate traffic from one side to the other. It is a very sharp corner; we understand that.

**Mr GREEN** - We did see a couple of cars cut the corner while we were there.

**Mr ASHLIN** - Yes. There is no line marking there and that may help and the signs may help again.

**Mr GREEN** - Is it because of the house on the corner there that it is difficult for you to realign that corner?

**Mr ASHLIN** - The council have done up that corner. As you could see, it was resealed and had new kerb, gutter and footpath. The council did that work prior to our moving in and doing any design so, in hindsight, you would probably try to purchase the corner house and make that corner better but that has not happened so we are just meeting up with what is there.

**Mr GREEN** - What do you think the life of this project is in a ballpark figure? I know we have a lot of work on flows here but with respect to the usefulness of this link road as it stands before we get back to the situation we are in now, what sort of lifespan are we thinking about?

**Mr MIDSON** - That is a good question, a lot of that will come down to how much development actually occurs into the future. The Pelham Street road itself will not fall over; I think the other intersections will fall over before that does. For the situation to get bad again it will again come down to the traffic lights, I think, they will be a restricting factor. The road that we are proposing to upgrade here is still not a highway standard, if you like, so it is not going to be that attractive. I think there is a bit of a fine line between turning it into a highway and forcing a lot of cars into a residential area or really just giving a bit of a relief valve, if you like, for the Tasman Highway. So it is probably not a very long-term fix but I think that it should serve its function well for 20 years or so at least before things start to fall down. The problem with predicting that far out is that, again, people change their driver behaviour in accordance with what happens. So as the traffic volumes increase people change their driver behaviour and that sort of thing. I guess to some extent that is happening now. Where people know it is a very busy road in the morning they might leave earlier, for instance. I guess in answer to your question, it is a difficult one to answer with any certainty but this solution, because we are removing traffic volume and providing two routes, it will serve long-term into the future.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Just a question I had in regard to the Pelham Street and Cole Street intersection where the proposal is to acquire the house one talked about and to put a roundabout in there and, I understand now, the alignment with Weston Hill Road. So you are saying definitively that traffic lights are not an option there? That a roundabout is still the best option?

**Mr MIDSON** - Certainly traffic lights would work at that intersection - sorry, this is Weston Hill Road?

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr MIDSON** - From a traffic management point of view they would work. I do not think they would work as efficiently as a roundabout because of the traffic flow that we have there. It still requires the junctions to be aligned.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - I was going to ask you about the cap ex. Have you done an exercise on the capital cost of lights and the -

**Mr MIDSON** - I have not. I am not sure whether that is something that GHD has done. Generally speaking, depending on the diameter of the roundabout it can be very similar in costs, particularly when land acquisition is obviously going to be one of the main factors involved. That will be the case for both junction arrangements. So there is probably not much difference between the two layouts. Certainly traffic lights have a longer-term maintenance cost associated with them whereas roundabouts do not. There has been no costing but it will probably be the same order of magnitude for traffic lights. However, a roundabout will be safer and certainly provides a good level of service for that intersection.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Roundabouts obviously handle a certain volume of traffic. After that you come to traffic lights, don't you? That has been, I think, the standard practice. So, for the next 20 years you are confident that the traffic volumes will not exceed the capacity of that roundabout and you might need to install those?

**Mr MIDSON** - I am fairly certain that is the case. I am just checking the results. Certainly the level of service performs very well into the future with a roundabout. There are no problems with the capacity at that intersection. That would be different if there were very unbalanced flows, which is what is the case with, say, Midway Point roundabout, for instance. There is an issue there with unbalanced flows but that is not the case with this roundabout. It should perform fine with the flows that are forecast in 10, 20 years' time.

**Mr BEST** - Just in relation to Mr Kessarios' situation, I think we looked at a map when we were looking at the site earlier today that showed commercial land at Cole Street. I do not have this map in this report, although it is certainly a very good report. It appeared that his property would not be far from what appeared to be a car park.

**Mr ASHLIN** - Yes, that is true. The Coles car park or the development behind him backs onto his back property. That shows it on the roundabout site for Cole Street there.

**Mr BEST** - Yes. I suppose the obvious question is: I do not know if it is illegal but is it feasible or possible that that could be his entry -

**Mr ASHLIN** - I think that one of his worries is that, if we purchase this land and we only require half of it to build our road that we might sell it or give it to the adjoining owner to use as part of his car park. I certainly cannot state what is going to happen in the future but I am guessing DIER do not really go out to sell their land to make profit.

**Mr BEST** - No.

**Mr MIDSON** - Again, it is hard for me to say, but selling half his property and keeping the rest has been looked at and debated greatly. We ended up in the Appeals Tribunal as well regarding this. It was dropped in the end. We cannot give him access to that land. The only person who probably will have access to it is the property behind, which will become the car park.

**Mr BEST** - Do we know if there is any process that he could apply to use that as an access with the private owner? It just seems to me that that could be a very good solution to the whole problem.

**Mr ASHLIN** - In the latest plans we have seen for the proposed Coles area, they had a KFC right behind his back fence with a takeaway drive-up right around the back of it, going along his back fence and coming out at the front again. Unless you are going to have a car park coming off that access road it would not work. They are the latest plans and they have been changed a lot. I cannot speak for the developer but they are the latest plans we have seen. KFC wants it to be there because it is diagonally opposite McDonald's on the other side.

**Mr BEST** - In relation to roundabouts, I come from a city of roundabouts, that is Devonport. I think they well and truly started before I was an alderman on the council. They even have one that features a railway line through its middle. In relation to the configuration of the roundabouts, particularly the one on Cole and Pelham streets, the design feature of that will be such that there will not be difficulties with towing caravans, for example?

**Mr ASHLIN** - Not at all. We have allowed for B-doubles and log trucks to get through there in a direct route. You can see the two circles on the plan; one is higher in the middle and obviously the outside is a mountable kerb and if they have to use it it is there to be used. There is very thick concrete infill on the inside so it is very drivable and we expect that should last. It is designed for that sort of thing to happen. The inside roundabout is not mountable.

**Mr GREEN** - On that corner again, we talked on site with the truck mechanic about the line. We said it was going to be a divided dotted line so he still has access to his business.

**Mr ASHLIN** - We have it dotted in the middle so that they can access across it.

**Mr GREEN** - Can you explain to the committee exactly what the situation is going to be with the parking adjacent to the shop on the corner? The lessee was worried that parking would be diminished.

**Mr ASHLIN** - First, at the front of her shop on Cole Street we have put a little blister kerb. There are two of them, one either side for the pedestrians to come out and access the median island in the middle. That is a refuge for them if they get halfway across the road and the traffic is coming the other way. It is a wide road and very busy so we put that there. That takes up probably a third of a car park space. She has three car park spaces at the front of her place and we think she can get three cars in there unless one is a car with a trailer or something else. On Pelham Street we have that wide concrete blister.



What we have added to this plan - and we have only done that in the last week or so, but I discussed it with the lessee - we are going to put a truck loading bay in there because she gets a lot of customers at the front of the shop. The trucks stop there and we have said we will put the truck stop on that side so that she still has that area out the front for the customers to stop. She gets a lot of her trade in the early morning and that is where they park as they are going past so we are trying to keep that for her. The truck bay will have bollards around it so that nobody can drive right around the corner and do silly things.

**Mr ROLPH** - That first blister that Leon referred to will also direct the traffic down the middle of Cole Street rather than allowing it to come around and be confronted by a parked vehicle as well. It will serve two purposes: the protection of the pedestrians and directing the traffic down the middle of the road rather than the side of the road.

**Mr ASHLIN** - It is similar to the things they do in town where they take out the corner and blister it out so that it protects parked cars either end.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - I notice that GHD did a business survey. In your words what would be the results of that? Were they basically positive or were they negative, or did they raise different concerns?

**Mr MIDSON** - We attended a meeting.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Was it a public meeting?

**Mr MIDSON** - It was a public meeting. The Sorell Business Council held a meeting at the Masonic Hall, I think in October. We had a meeting with them. We had our computer modelling up on the screen and showed what would happen if we did nothing or if we did what we have here, the best outcome. They were very impressed that we are trying to get most of this traffic off the main road in peak periods. They have a problem with people not pulling over because they want to keep going through the town. They are being held up five or 10 minutes in the queue by people who do not want to pull over to jump out and get a loaf of bread or something, jump back in the car, find they cannot get back into the queue - because people will not let them. They were quite impressed with how the modelling worked and what would happen to them. In the end, it was a really good outcome for us.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - What about the general community? Have you had much in the way of feedback? Obviously we have representations here today.

**Mr MIDSON** - We have. The general community from the area outside the parts of the town that we are working in has been very positive. It is probably the community that we are affecting most, the people that live in Pelham Street, Parsonage Place and Fitzroy Street, and businesses like Perry McGinniss as well. There are other little businesses adjacent to them, like the service station and they think they may lose some business. That is the major complaint from the people we are physically, directly affecting.

**Mr BEST** - I have some interesting comments. I think it was quite a detailed report, particularly the costs that you have included. I do not know how sensitive it is. Normally when we get reports like this, they are very general, but you have put in almost

every sub-line item. I am not sure whether you want that to be available to the contractors. It is appreciated but I do not know how sensitively you want us to treat this document.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - You are saying we have to be a bit careful.

**Mr BEST** - Yes, you have itemised everything and I think you might prefer it that were not made available.

**Mr ASHLIN** - We created this for your benefit.

**Mr BEST** - I appreciate that, yes. We do not normally get it.

**Mr ASHLIN** - We believe that it is much better from our point of view. We do not want to hide or disguise anything because it has gone up from the original price when we given the election commitment. You can see why some of it has gone up, especially if you look in the miscellaneous column, part 8, where you will see some things that are hidden but you do not find out until you start the design.

**Mr BEST** - Yes, I can see all of those there.

**Mr ASHLIN** - Some of them are quite huge.

**Mr BEST** - Thank you very much. It was not a criticism.

**Mr ASHLIN** - No, that is fine.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - If there are no further questions, thank you, gentlemen.

**Mr ASHLIN** - Thank you.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**

**MS SHARON FOTHERINGHAM**, RESIDENT OF SORELL, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Thank you very much for appearing. I invite you to make a brief presentation to the committee.

**Ms FOTHERINGHAM** - I have been listening to what the members of DIER have stated and I disagree strongly with them. I made a submission although when it went in the paper as a by-pass, I was wholly in support of that bypass. I am totally 100 per cent or 1 000 per cent against the roundabouts, as is the majority of the population in Sorell. I must also state here that I attend most council meetings, as do most of the people that are here today, and at one council meeting several of the councillors referred to these roundabouts as a bandaid issue; that it was the Government's problem and if they objected to it nothing would get done but if the roundabouts were put in it then became the Government's problem and it was up to the Government to fix the problems that they had put in. That has been stated at several meetings.

I was amazed to hear that the council supports this because at the normal council meetings that is not what has come across to the public. They are totally against it.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Where do you live, Sharon, just as a matter of interest?

**Ms FOTHERINGHAM** - I live at Forcett. I live on the Arthur Highway and I am about 10 minutes out of Sorell. I do not work but I use the roads occasionally. I used it this morning and there was a problem again at the Midway thing; I had to wait there for about eight minutes. So DIER has not solved that problem there either, but that is another issue. Yesterday I was going through Sorell at twenty past two and I got held up at the industrial estate on the main road there and it took 25 minutes to get from the industrial estate to the T-junction at the other main road. DIER states that this only happens in peak hour, but huge delays are becoming far more frequent in Sorell now. The two or three weeks prior to Christmas traffic in Sorell was absolute bedlam. It was bad for drivers, it was bad for pedestrians and it was bad for businesses because they have stated that people will not stop because they cannot get back into the flow of traffic. Sorell is just one huge problem.

The other thing that concerns me, too, is that DIER does not seem to have taken into account that there is only one bridge just down from the roundabout at McDonald's that provides access to the whole of the peninsula. If something happens to that bridge everyone has to go back up to Orford and come down the Wielangta Forest Road or something because that is the only access to the peninsula. It does not seem to have been included in this assessment, so that is a problem too.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Would it assist the traffic congestion in Sorell if there were more off-street car parking? I do not know the town all that well but is that an issue?

**Ms FOTHERINGHAM** - I think it is. I believe there is one car park at the back of the new chemist. There is a big area there that they are trying to develop. Local residents have not been made aware of parking that has opened up. It is a huge issue and it is one of the problems.

There is another thing I am interested in: DIER said that this project has a lifespan of 10 to 20 years. I do not know if they have taken into account in my submission No. 2 on Growth of the Sorell Municipality. The Sorell Council actually said that by 2021 there would be an increase of 30 per cent in the municipality. I do not know if DIER have taken this into account. Also, I do not know if the council have taken into account the situation when the State Government takes over the sewerage and water upgrades. A lot of the local residents believe that places such as Dodges Ferry and Lewisham will develop and I do not know if that has been included in the 30 per cent so that will add more problems for the road. I do not think the infrastructure is going to cope with it. Even the solution that they say is going to work now I do not think it will.

I think I have already stated that the general public are not in favour of this. Most of the people that I have spoken to in the area have attended meetings and are against it - they cannot see it working at all.

DIER and I think the council have put in clearways. But it is the same old problem; the council say that it is DIER's problem, that they should be policing it and ensuring that people do not park there, and DIER say, 'It's in the Sorell area, it's your area and you should be policing it'. It does not get policed, the clearways are not clear. They are always full in peak hours or the times that they are supposed to be clear. That is a problem, too. I think if this matter was policed it would assist in the road management because people would be able to travel more freely. I think if you were looking at solving the problem for Sorell - and the businesses certainly would not like this - you would probably have to say that in peak hour traffic nobody parks anywhere in Sorell, that it be one big clearway.

The other thing that worries me is the situation when Coles comes to the area. That area already has a lot of traffic problems and when Coles comes these will be magnified. It is going to be one huge problem and more so for pedestrians too because I do not think there will be facilities for pedestrians to cross. You have your roundabout right up away from Coles and Coles is down the other end near the bridge and that, once again, will cause problems.

As I say, the queuing is not just at peak hour. The queuing in Sorell now is becoming virtually the whole day. That is basically all I would like to say. I think that this fix is not a scientific one; it just seems to be a short-term remedy, but it is an expensive one and one that will not go much over 20 years. I doubt that it will even cope after 10 years. I think it is very short-sighted.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Thank you very much, Sharon. I think we can see where you are coming from. Do any members have any questions?

**Mr BEST** - You explained it pretty well.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - I think you explained where you are coming from exactly and I appreciate that. Thank you.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**

**Mr PETER GRIERSON**, RESIDENT OF SORELL, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Thanks Peter. Once again, the same process. I will invite you to give your two bob's worth.

**Mr GRIERSON** - I will just read out what we have written down if you do not mind.

My name is Peter Grierson and we live at 185 Arthur Highway, Sorell. This submission is on behalf of me and my wife. We do not believe the sealed road link will be viable. Roundabouts have been proven not to work because of more traffic congestion. The roundabouts were removed from the Brooker Highway. They did not work. The Mornington roundabout and the Midway Point roundabouts have caused huge traffic congestion. There is not enough room on the proposed street to have a large roundabout and small ones cause dangerous driving conditions. Having three roundabouts, one after the other, will cause a tremendous bottleneck and traffic will bank up continuously. If there were a fatal accident on the McDonald's roundabout the highway would be closed for hours. They are talking about what I call a suicide lane in the middle to turn right into Coles. The first time I heard about that was today. Good for tail-enders, I reckon.

The street to be used for the link road is not wide enough to cope with the volume of traffic it will have to bear. If there were any more businesses built on the thoroughfare, the entrances and exits would be too close to the roundabouts therefore dangerous. That would not be allowed by the Council, thus curbing a growth in the town.

The traffic volume on the southern side of Sorell will double or treble over the next 10 years - as soon as the southern beaches get reticulated water and sewerage. The rumour is that that will be in three to four years, but you know what rumours are.

The link road will only be a bandaid solution for our traffic. The money would be much better spent on a bypass which will have to go through eventually. The Sorell municipality is one of the fastest growing in Tasmania, most of which will be in the southern part.

I do not have much to say, but it is straight to the point.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Thank you very much.

**Mr GREEN** - So what is your solution?

**Mr GRIERSON** - A bypass. Forty five years ago we were talking about it. There was a meeting in Sorell a few years ago when one of your other Premiers came down. Lin Thorp was there and she said they would spend \$18 million on it. We did not realise that they meant the causeway - that's when McGees Bridge was done.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Thank you very much.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**

**Ms SUZANNE WINDSOR**, RESIDENT OF PELHAM STREET, SORELL, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Thank you very much, Suzanne. I invite you to give you evidence.

**Ms WINDSOR** - Thank you very much for the opportunity. I am a long-term resident of Pelham Street, Sorell, and a long-term resident of Sorell. I have 30 years' commitment to the benefit of this town. I see what is happening here - at a not minor cost but for \$3.4 million - as being a waste of money going nowhere to solving the problems of Sorell. We are all agreed that Sorell has an enormous traffic problem. Twice every day people attempt to negotiate their way from the southern areas or the east coast through Sorell to town and then back. That is twice a day. In the interim there are people trying to avoid that traffic by travelling at different times, also creating problems. The traffic problems will get worse.

Some 364 houses have been approved in the Weston Hill Road area. The development which will take place on the southern beaches and also along the east coast side of Sorell will only add to this problem. The thing that becomes obvious to a resident, to a layperson or anybody is that the spending of \$3.4 million for no real return is a waste of money. The fact that in 1963 the then council looked at the possible future need to bypass Sorell both to the east and along the Arthur Highway was an indicator that there was some forethought and vision happening. Since then no-one has actually taken this up. All of the solutions - the roundabouts, the lights, a white line here, a 25-kilometre sign there - are window dressing.

If this lasts 10 years we will be extremely lucky. In fact, if it copes with today's traffic I would be very surprised. I live on what would be just down from the Cole Street-Pelham Street roundabout. I see what happens now. I see them coming down the hill. This is not going to cope even now. With talk of further development - and a growth rate of some 30 per cent has been mentioned - I do not know how you can reasonably justify putting this forward as a proposition for traffic management. Any projection - and I am not quite sure where Keith's projections come from - that does not take into account the increased development is simply not dealing with the problem. This is outside being a resident or being affected by increased traffic or anything else. It is because I live in Sorell, I love Sorell, I would like to see it be a town. At the moment it is totally dysfunctional. It does not cope for its business community and I would question the figures that were stated about the business community supporting this. That is not what I hear as a resident of the town. That also indicates that there has not been an impact study done of any benefit for either the business or the residents or any long-term planning.

I am here to try to ask people to consider the future. Mr Midson mentioned that a bypass had been one of the suggestions put forward right back when, but that it had been quickly discounted. I wonder why that is the case and I wonder why, given the increased traffic, that it should not be reconsidered again. We, of the community, know that the council do not support this so we are fighting for our community, which is dying.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - You are saying that the council do not support this project?

**Ms WINDSOR** - The council has said in response to my queries 'not in my lifetime' - a direct quote as far as a bypass was concerned. They are certainly not supportive of bypassing.

**Mr GREEN** - Bypass or link road?

**Ms WINDSOR** - Bypassing. We are talking about serious solution here, which this is not.

**Mr GREEN** - I think the Chair was asking about the link road.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Yes.

**Ms WINDSOR** - The council would support the link road but as far as a long-term solution or a bypass is concerned, which is the only long-term solution as an entry way to the peninsula, the council, for some reason, do not support this. So it is up to us as community members to have our say. It is what brings us out, to fight for the life of our town, which is choking under such a volume of traffic.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Suzanne, have you been to council meetings and heard discussion and debate?

**Ms WINDSOR** - Yes. For the last 12 months, since DIER first put forward their project until 28 August when we had a DIER notification that this was what would be accepted by the council and would go ahead, I went to all the council meetings to add my voice in the public column to say that this is simply not a solution to the problem. It is not a solution to the problem and I just query the wisdom of spending \$3.4 million to achieve nothing. What it will simply do is to move the traffic congestion points sideways, otherwise known as 'laterally arabesquing' the problem, which is really not a solution.

I think Sharon makes a very good point about the one bridge. When I inquired I was told that some work would be done to that bridge to upgrade or repair it in 2012. This is the one link. For some reason, the idea of building a culverted road across that in the form of a bypass seems to be daunting for the Public Works department. When I see the extent of the road works that happen along the coast of Penguin, Burnie and Devonport, I do not see that one little culvert would be an enormous problem.

I encourage a look to the future and a permanent solution, not one for which we will all be sitting here again in maybe five years to revisit this. That strikes me as not a good idea at a cost of \$3.4 million.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Thank you very much; we appreciate your submission.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**

**Mr DAVID NEWITT**, RESIDENT OF SORELL, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**Mr NEWITT** - I would just like to endorse what all the others have said. My submission is somewhat different, something along the lines of a statement because it goes back a long way to the bypass proper, with government people involved in discussions.

The Arthur Highway bypass has been talked about for around 45 years. Discussions had taken place with the head of the Local Government Board, Mr Graeme Yeoland, about the year 2000 in relation to the Sorell bypass. I was told that certain things had to happen in Kingston, Mount Nelson and Glenorchy. It had to be cut back and the Government had two alternatives to look at: one was Brighton and the other was Sorell. He suggested Sorell was the most logical as there was a dual-lane highway to the airport roundabout and he further stated that the Arthur Highway bypass would be constructed within five years of that date.

**Mr BEST** - That was in 2000?

**Mr NEWITT** - Yes. I have a question mark as to the exact time because I have only kept day books for the last five or six years and not back quite that far. I had spoken to him some eight years ago.

Prior to this I had a meeting on site at the Arthur Highway and Rosendale Road junction with Ronald Middleton and Russ Bauer of the Department of Main Roads and Max Milton, the engineer of Sorell, in relation to a roundabout at Rosendale Road and the prospects of a highway bypass proper. The meeting was due to our having sought a rezoning of Mount Garrett to residential in the 1993 planning scheme. The discussion between the three of them was that, in the event of rezoning, a roundabout was to be constructed at Rosendale Road and the Arthur Highway. The Department of Main Roads said, 'We will send this back to Max Milton, place this in Mr Newitt's file and when the bypass is constructed the roundabout is to be incorporated at the same time'. We now have a small shopping centre at the Rosendale Road, and the business is booming, causing accidents there. There is 100 kph speed limit on a high access flow - I think something in the order of 1 000 cars a week enter the road, many causing accidents with the 100 kph speed limit where they are entering. This is the same place where they proposed the roundabout.

Coming back to the discussion with Graeme Yeoland, head of the Local Government Board, due to his comments about the Arthur Highway bypass being constructed within five years, I decided to put a submission through the Sorell Council to the Government to seek Federal funding for the Arthur Highway bypass, four lanes on both causeways and four lanes to the airport roundabout. Kerry Degraasi was the mayor at the time and she phoned me to say that all my submissions went to the Government, she thinks in 2002. I wonder what is on record. I also phoned Tony McDermott, who was a councillor at that time, and he said he recalls my making the submission to Mr Brian Inches. Could we seek from these departments and the Sorell Council the reply to these submissions and also what was sent back to the council in relation to this with Rodney Middleton sending the documentation back to the Sorell Council to put on record for the Arthur Highway bypass?



We know that the Federal Government is talking about releasing a \$40 billion economic stimulus package although it is still in the clouds at the moment. They are looking to boost the economy. Mr Green, we seek Federal funding for the Arthur Highway bypass. It is linked to the tourism on the whole of the peninsula to Port Arthur. The roads are bad all the way through to Port Arthur; they need to be totally upgraded and if this Federal funding is available for the development of areas and they are going to let this money come, let us seek this funding. Sorell residents suggest that if urgent action isn't taken to relieve this traffic problem things will only get worse. Mr Green, I know that you are pretty much a high-flyer with these proposals and you get things through. We know you did the one on the Pitt Water with the oysters and I would like to see you get this one through and not become a feather duster.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Thank you very much, Mr Newitt.

**Mr LEON ASHLIN WAS RECALLED AND RE-EXAMINED.**

**Mr BEST** - My apologies, Leon, but there was one representation I received but I forgot to raise. It was on behalf of the people who would likely be employed on this job and also other jobs that DIER would be contracting out. I received a letter from the assistant secretary of the CFMEU in relation to what they view as a lack of facilities for people working on the sides of roads. With this job there will be public toilets in and around the area, but more notably I think they were talking about other construction sites. Have you received any of this correspondence?

**Mr ASHLIN** - No, I haven't seen that one at all.

**Mr BEST** - I thought I would raise it because it is quite an important thing, particularly when people are working on sites. If it is a trend that is occurring, I think it is something that DIER needs to be mindful of and address.

**Mr ASHLIN** - Is this more a general issue rather than something to do with the bypass?

**Mr BEST** - It was raised in regard to this road but I guess it is more of a general issue. The submission came into the Parliament in relation to this road.

**Mr ASHLIN** - I understand it is about working on the sides of the highways where there aren't facilities, obviously.

**Mr BEST** - Yes, probably more than that particular job perhaps. I just wanted to pass it on.

**Mr ASHLIN** - That is fine. I can look into that.

**Mr BEST** - While you are there, is there anything else you might like to add regarding any of the comments that we received?

**Mr ASHLIN** - No, I think most people spoke very well and it is really nice to get those comments. A lot of those comments were written down in the back of our submission, especially the residents' issues and how we answered them. They were mainly the representations that came in from the development application to council. These are basically our answers and obviously you have read through those.

I do not think there is anything new that we need to talk about. You have gone through the budget and you can see how we are spending that money. I think we are pretty right, thank you.

**Mr NEWITT** - How many submissions have been brought forward?

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Submissions from the general public?

**Mr NEWITT** - Yes.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Ten, including the one from the department.

**Mr NEWITT** - Would it be possible for us to get copies of those submissions now?

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - The secretary could post a copy to you.

**Mr NEWITT** - Can we all have a copy?

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Yes, that can be done. Thank you.

If that is all, on behalf of the committee I would like to thank the department and the proponents for their submissions, also the residents of Sorell who were succinct and put their case well. Thank you very much. The committee will now deliberate after taking evidence on the redevelopment of Ogilvie High School.

**Mr ASHLIN** - Can I say one more thing, which I forgot? We are going to tender this job because we want to get it constructed, depending on what comes out of this meeting as set down in the contract documents. I have been told by my superiors to push this on because we have been sitting on it for so long or we will miss the opportunity to get it done prior to Christmas. I just want the residents to know that it will be advertised in the paper on Saturday.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - The committee is content that that happens, with that proviso that we can either approve or not approve.

**Mr ASHLIN** - Exactly, and the contract will not be awarded until we at least deal with all the issues.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - We have done that on projects before.

**Mr ASHLIN** - I did not want to hide that and find these people thinking we had gone behind their backs.

**Ms WINDSOR** - Excuse me, could I just get clarification of that? That will not go ahead until you have considered this.

**Mr ASHLIN** - That is exactly right. These people have to consider it.

**Ms WINDSOR** - You cannot push it ahead.

**Mr ASHLIN** - No, I cannot award it at all.

**Ms WINDSOR** - Just checking. Thank you.

**DEPUTY CHAIR** - Okay, thank you very much.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**