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THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON 26 MARCH 2019

RICHMOND ROAD PROJECTS - SECTION 1 CAMBRIDGE LINK ROAD AND SECTIONS 3, 4 AND 5 RICHMOND ROAD

Mr KEVIN BOURNE, PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM LEADER, PROJECT SERVICES, **Mr LUKE MIDDLETON**, PROJECT MANAGER, NETWORK PLANNING, AND **Mr STEFANO CONFORTI**, PROJECT MANAGER, PROJECT SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Valentine) - Welcome, gentlemen. Thank you for appearing today and especially for the guided tour on the project this morning, which was very much appreciated. We are pleased to hear your evidence today, but before you begin I would like to inform you of some important aspects of committee proceedings. A committee hearing is a proceeding of parliament. This means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege. This is an important legal protection that allows individuals giving evidence to a parliamentary committee to speak with complete freedom without the fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place out of parliament. It applies to ensure that parliament receives the very best information when conducting its inquiries. It is important to be aware that this protection is not accorded to you for statements that may be defamatory and are repeated or referred to by you outside the confines of the parliamentary proceedings. This is a public hearing, so members of the public and journalists may be present and this means your evidence may be reported. Do you understand?

Mr BOURNE - Yes.

Mr CONFORTI - Yes.

Mr MIDDLETON - Yes.

CHAIR - Would you like to make an opening statement?

Mr CONFORTI - We are here to present the project we are about to tender, which includes the Cambridge new link road which will extend off the existing Richmond Road, which will be upgraded. This is part of the master plan for Richmond Road. As we know, Richmond Road, commonly also known as Colebrook Main Road, goes from Richmond to Cambridge.

The new link road is on a greenfield site and will go from the Kennedy Roundabout to Jane Lane. The length of that section is about 1.6 kilometres, while the upgrade of the existing section of the main road will be 3.3 kilometres. We are here to describe the project in more detail and add information to what we gave you on site, or just to respond to your questions.

Ms RATTRAY - I add my appreciation for the opportunity to visit the site as well. It is certainly beneficial in having a complete understanding of what is being proposed. I refer you to page 7, 2.6 of the project summary and progress to date on the submission. I would like to explore a little around the investigations and surveys that have identified local environmental and heritage constraints. I think it is worth putting those on the record, particularly when questions arose this

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morning on the site visit. Could we have those identified? We are aware that there is a threatened species plant called juncus.

Mr CONFORTI - *Juncus amabilis*.

Ms RATTRAY - There is also reference to riparian vegetation and potential foraging habitat for threatened bird species. What has been put in place to deal with those? It would be useful to have that on the public record.

Mr CONFORTI - I understand *juncus amabilis* is considered a rare species although it is very common and apparently will soon be taken off the list of rare species.

Ms RATTRAY - So not quite as threatened as we were led to believe?

Mr CONFORTI - No. There are a number of small communities exactly from where we were looking, from the roundabout on that straight line, looking north to the Barilla Rivulet, and then a few more on the other side of the rivulet. We will apply for a permit to take and, as I said, I talked to our manager looking after this aspect, and it is not a concern for this project.

CHAIR - Do we know how extensive that permit to take will need to be? Any idea of numbers of plants that might need to go?

Mr CONFORTI - We will provide the map - the survey.

CHAIR - Are you tabling that?

Mr CONFORTI - Yes - they are the blue dots. It is not anticipated that the permit will not be granted because it is a common recurrence for this particular -

CHAIR - You apply for a permit from which body?

Mr CONFORTI - From DPIPWE.

CHAIR - The Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment. Is that right?

Mr CONFORTI - Yes.

Ms RATTRAY - Do those permits need to be in place, not before the tender is issued, just before the works commence?

Mr CONFORTI - Yes.

CHAIR - Is that correct?

Mr CONFORTI - It is.

Ms RATTRAY - As to the threatened bird species, any comment on what is identified in the submission?

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Mr CONFORTI - Normally when we take some bigger plants, trees, we just check that there are no existing nests, and they understand that if there are existing holes, not nests, in the trees, they would be closed before construction.

Ms RATTRAY - So they couldn't build another nest?

Mr CONFORTI - Exactly.

CHAIR - Were there any nests of any significance found?

Mr CONFORTI - No, not at this stage, but normally we do the -

CHAIR - No wedge-tailed eagle nests?

Mr CONFORTI - We normally do these surveys just before construction.

Ms RATTRAY - So if there is a nest, will construction need to be halted until the eggs hatch?

Mr CONFORTI - Exactly, that is what we do. We normally close the hole before their season for the nesting.

CHAIR - I might ask another question on that because we were talking about the heritage aspect being also Aboriginal heritage. Can you explain what that is and how you have negotiated your way through that issue, and maybe also explain if any advice has been sought from Aboriginal groups and/or their level of happiness with that?

Mr CONFORTI - As part of the project we investigated the site and our archaeologist found a site that could have been significant near the side of our corridor and inside the corridor. Our initial design had the alignment in the middle of the corridor and because of the archaeological significance of the site, we found we had to move towards the west to avoid that particular site. The archaeologist submitted his report to the Aboriginal community and they haven't given any feedback, so basically the legislation says to avoid the site, which we did, so really we are not impacting, but the archaeologist did inform the community, which has not given us any feedback of any sort.

CHAIR - Do we know the nature of it? Was a midden or depressions found?

Mr CONFORTI - Not a midden; it is artefacts.

CHAIR - Artefacts?

Mr CONFORTI - They are closely chartered to be considered a site rather than -

CHAIR - Are we talking about stone tools? Is that what we are talking about?

Mr CONFORTI - Yes. I have seen the photos of the report and, yes, they are stone tools.

CHAIR - How voluminous is the report? Is it possible for us to have a copy of the report?

Mr CONFORTI - Sure, yes.

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CHAIR - As far as you aware, there has been no feedback?

Mr CONFORTI - No.

CHAIR - Was feedback requested?

Mr CONFORTI - Yes, it is part of the process that if they have feedback of any sort, they will give it to us or give it to their archaeologists, I suppose.

CHAIR - Has any reminder has been sent?

Mr CONFORTI - I have to check on that.

Mr SHELTON - As we discussed out on site, my question is about this road reserve and how long it had been in place. When the highway/freeway went to the airport and the overpass was put in at the specific place, it was mentioned this land or road reserve had been in place since 1995. Could you talk about that to get it on record? I notice you compare the environmental side of things, this plant we talk about, and the road reserve typically; and my comment is that the road reserve typically goes through agricultural land and so the land has been ploughed. Looking at the photo on the front cover, the road reserve goes through a number of paddocks and some of these endangered plants are actually within an area that has been ploughed. That is my point, they are not native -

CHAIR - It is not a pristine native environment.

Mr SHELTON - No. I made comment on looking at that. My main issue is that the locals have known about this road reserve being in place for a number of years. Can you comment along those lines as far as objections or any issues that were raised?

Mr CONFORTI - No objections were raised on this particular matter. I think I actually read in the report issued in 1995, on 2.6, the summary and progress to date, the paragraph before the last one, it was proclaimed since 1995.

CHAIR - Could you expand on the level and extent of public consultation held over the last 20 to 25 years in relation to this so we can clearly understand the opportunities the community has had to have input?

Mr CONFORTI - In September 2017, there was a presentation to the local council. I did not attend that. I reckon that Luke perhaps did. Public consultations also took place in September 2017. They took place for a few hours in the public hall in Cambridge and then a few days later, in Richmond.

CHAIR - Was that in the evening or was it at a time when people had access?

Mr CONFORTI - The one in Cambridge was in the morning over the weekend, and the one in Richmond was in the evening and was a -

CHAIR - People had plenty of opportunity to get there if they needed to?

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Mr CONFORTI - Yes, it was held on a workday evening. In the report we have the exact dates of those two events. That is in 6.4, public and stakeholders et cetera, on page 16.

CHAIR - I have that, thank you.

Ms BUTLER - The business - the Coal Valley Vineyards and the PID 517653 - is located at 257 Richmond Road and we were adjacent to that today in Jane Lane. That is a business whose door, as such, is on that particular piece of road.

Mr CONFORTI - Cellar door?

Ms BUTLER - Well, I should probably re-explain. Quite a lot of tourists drive along that road and they stop at certain vineyards as they go, so easy access is very much part of any of those businesses' business plans. Have any contingency plans been put in place for that business or any other affected business with access to their sites during construction? I suppose that one would be the main one. Have consultations happened with that particular business owner?

Mr CONFORTI - Normally during construction we make sure we always leave the access open to the landowners, the adjacent landowners. If there is anything specific and temporary closure has to be done, we definitely consult and have plenty of consultation with that landowner. I am not aware of any particular access that has to be closed for any length of time.

Ms BUTLER - I just want to make sure on the record that appropriate lengths will be undertaken to ensure that business is not any worse off because of this construction, either during construction or post construction. I think that is important.

I want to ask you a question about lighting at the actual roundabout. I am not a civil engineer or lighting engineer of any sort, but is consideration being given to make sure that lighting on that roundabout and on those intersections is appropriate?

Mr CONFORTI - Yes, there is already some existing lighting on the roundabout. We will put some more lighting at the approach of the fifth lane. That is basically the new leg that we will put in the roundabout from the new Cambridge link. There would be one light in the traffic island of that particular leg. The old roundabout will be revised.

Ms BUTLER - Is that tested? I know there have been problems in other roundabouts around the state where overhead singular lighting in a roundabout is sometimes not adequate, especially when there are foggy or very dark conditions. Even though it is an industrial area, it is quite rural and remote at the same time. Are those kinds of considerations being taken into account?

Mr CONFORTI - I personally don't know anything about any problem on the existing lighting of that roundabout. As we will add more lighting, if anything, it will do things better. I don't know of any specific problem at that or any other roundabout.

Ms BUTLER - No, I haven't heard of any on that particular roundabout, but there have been problems with other roundabouts. As conditions and car lighting change, there often are problems with it being bright enough for people to negotiate the roundabouts appropriately.

Mr CONFORTI - I suppose that if the problem eventuates during or after construction, we are still there to resolve it, like all problems.

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Mr BOURNE - Can I just add to that? The lighting will also be designed - and is currently being designed - to the relevant Australian Standard. Part of the performance criteria there is to set a certain lighting level at the ground below, at conflict points like the junctions.

CHAIR - That is like for sight distance - vehicles approaching the roundabout, being able to perceive that it is there rather than thinking it is a continuation of the road and going over the middle of it. It is that sort of circumstance?

Mr BOURNE - That's right, yes.

Ms RATTRAY - Particularly with five exit points or entry points, that is a lot. You are reading signs -

CHAIR - There are six, actually.

Ms RATTRAY - especially if you're not sure where you're going. There's a lot going on while you're driving.

Mr BOURNE - As Stefano said, there is a light in the centre of the roundabout and there is an existing light on each of those existing legs and we will add another one, so there will be a light per leg of the roundabout at each one of those junctions.

Ms RATTRAY - It is a large roundabout, though, and the lights are bang in the middle and look like they're facing down into the grass. They didn't look like they were - but I haven't seen it at night so I will reserve my judgment there.

Ms BUTLER - In the bottom part of the bridge where a bike pass is going underneath, is there a future planning consideration to provide lighting in that darker place for bike riders?

Mr CONFORTI - We didn't consider that aspect so we will have discussions with the council and consider that.

Ms BUTLER - Have there been any discussions or are there strategies to deal with minimising the damage or fatalities with cars hitting wildlife along that road? There are different strategies now that can be put into place. I think there are beacons of sorts and lots of different ideas people are coming up with to try to minimise wildlife fatalities. Have any of those considerations been considered with that new stretch of road? I imagine a lot of wallabies would be crossing that section of road during the evening.

Mr CONFORTI - It is not part of the scope of the project.

Mr MIDDLETON - I don't think it is something we have looked at directly.

Ms BUTLER - Is it normally something that is looked at when there are new roads going through rural areas? I know we have a lot of problems with roadkill.

Mr CONFORTI - I know that the department - although it does not apply to this project - has been looking at these types of things and devices to move the wildlife away from the road, as they had for the Murchison Highway on the west coast, but nothing like that has been part of this project.

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They reckon that is because of the amount of wildlife on the west coast which has almost no comparison to this.

CHAIR - It might be that the level of roadkill is not so great either. I guess it is always something that can be looked at in a project like this as to whether there is a significant amount of wildlife. I travel that road a little bit and I don't remember it being a huge issue, whereas if you were travelling from Huonville to Cygnet, for instance, it seems to be the number one roadkill capital of Tasmania.

Ms RATTRAY - I doubt it. I think Mark and I have got that. The east coast is known -

CHAIR - I don't know, but there were 24 or 25 bodies just between Huonville and Cradoc, I think. You don't know whether that particular area experiences a lot of wildlife carnage? You are not aware of it?

Mr CONFORTI - No. As we drove through today I didn't see anything.

Mr SHELTON - I travel that road quite frequently coming down and have never seen much wildlife roadkill on it at all, not like some others. The road reserve, as I said before, is mainly through rural land so there's not a lot of scrub or bush around for wildlife to hide in on the edge of the road. If you did happen to fence it, you would be fencing it onto the farms and the farmers down there may not appreciate that either.

CHAIR - Still, I think it is a good point to bring up with any road going through a rural area as to whether there is.

Ms BUTLER - It might be something we look at in the future.

CHAIR - I guess we could consider writing to the department asking that when it considers these projects, to please think about whether there are roadkill issues. It might be a way forward.

Ms RATTRAY - In regard to the severing of two rural properties for this project - it is quite significant for any property to be split in two, and there are two properties - can you talk us through that process and put on the public record the support from those landowners in regard to that?

Mr CONFORTI - We have been in continued discussions with the stakeholders, the locals and the property owners around the project, and we are continuing to do so. We are providing some access in the new link road and we normally improve the existing access.

Ms RATTRAY - And some signage for those properties, Stefano?

Mr CONFORTI - Yes. Normally, if they have tourist signs, for example, we replace them, and if they have a business or something, they can ask the department for signage at any stage, so it is not just during the project.

Ms RATTRAY - And both lots of landowners have been supportive of the project to date?

Mr CONFORTI - Yes.

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Mr SHELTON - Following from that, putting a road through the middle - and it is a new road, not an existing one - where you have to build an underpass et cetera, was it considered a stock underpass? One of them is not a significant amount of land so the amount of stock going from one side of the road to the other wouldn't be that great; however, the Cambridge and Richmond people at some time will probably be pulled up by the local farmers moving stock from one side to the other. That will happen because access has been given and it is the only real way of getting across the road, unless you truck stock from one side of the road to the other, which is not practical. Where is the point at which the department starts looking at whether it would be feasible or viable to do a stock underpass? I take it this was too small, which is why it's not there. Where is that point that you -

Mr CONFORTI - We normally look at the existing activity, how they actually move the stock. If the projects stop them doing that movement of stock, we look into providing a stock underpass or an access for them to continue to do business as usual. Normally, if we don't change the business we don't provide any extra underpass or any other access. This is in normal circumstances. I understand that one of the properties we are severing does not have stock and consideration was given to an underpass, but I think the trucks or agricultural plant they had were far too big to be able to go under, so an access from one side to the other was given so they could cross the new link road there.

Mr SHELTON - I can understand vehicular movements; you only need 30 seconds to get across the road, whereas stock movements aren't quite that predictable and therefore a stock underpass separate to a complete underpass for vehicles and so on might have been considered, but it would be up to the property owner, of course, as to whether they entered into discussion with the department, were they that way inclined. I am mainly asking the question for future reference when we are dealing with these things. From my point of view, being a part-time farmer and the issues you have nowadays with liability, if you want to move a couple of cattle, for instance, across a road, getting enough people there to have signage on either side of the road and making sure that nothing happens and you haven't got a -

CHAIR - A B-double boring down on you because it can't pull up in a hurry.

Mr SHELTON - Yes, or a beast out on the road going in the wrong direction at 30 kilometres an hour and all those sorts of things. A stock underpass keeps them encapsulated, nothing can go wrong, and they get to the other side of the road. That is separate to, as you say, complete vehicle access from one side of the road to the other.

CHAIR - I guess it is a question as to whether that came up in discussion with the property owners. Did it come up in discussions with them wanting that?

Mr CONFORTI - As I said, we explored the possibility of having an underpass that wasn't for stock, it was for plant, and the plant was far too big to make an underpass so we gave them access.

CHAIR - I guess it is what it is.

Mr CONFORTI - It is a bit specific really. Now I am talking not about this project, but you really have to go into the nitty-gritty of how they run the business and what we are causing to the business. Normally, as I understand it - I am not a farmer, so I may be completely off the mark -

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they put the stock in vehicles and then cross the road and take them to the other side. That is depending on the integrities of the highways that we have.

Mr SHELTON - The highway is a totally different scenario because you have the Highways Act and everything else. This is basically about a country road and what happens as far as stock movements go. I would make the point to the department that you looked at the activity on those properties we are dealing with at the moment. I suggest that somewhat of a futuristic point of view should be looked at. If the current owner decided to sell, what is the potential for those two pieces of land? Could it be intensified, and, therefore, one day would there be a need to have an underpass? If that box were ticked and even though it might not be relevant for the current owner, it could be a significant advantage down the track if somebody comes to you and says, 'We want to dig up this road and put in a stock underpass.' There is no cheaper way to do it, or no cheaper time to do it than when a new road is going in.

CHAIR - During construction.

Mr MIDDLETON - Certainly, we had those discussions around an underpass for one of the owners and as Stefano said, after consideration the owner actually said, 'No, that's not going to work for me.' We can really only provide - again, as Stefano was saying - what a business needs. It would be nice to take account of what might happen, but we're not really in a position to do that and we'll just have to cross that bridge when we come to it and if there is a change in use that intensifies the use of the land involving stock of some description.

Mr SHELTON - In order to justify your decision, I can understand the decision in this case. In reality the western side of the new link road is restricted by the old road anyway, so there was never going to be a significant agricultural activity because of the limited size. Maybe these things could be considered down the track. I only make that point.

Ms RATTRAY - In respect of bridges, when we were onsite, I asked: why weren't we using large culverts? They are much more cost effective. You responded with an answer that you are futureproofing it. We don't do that for stock underpasses, but we do it for bridges, so I would like on the public record why we're having bridges and not large culverts.

Mr CONFORTI - Before the bridge is designed, we have a hydraulic study on the flow that is not the current flow, but predicted to be 100 to 2000, I think Kevin told us, for the speed of the water. From that study the size of the bridge is designed and obviously for this particular case the culverts were not adequate and not big enough for the flow of water that we wanted to pass under those bridges. It is in the interests of the department to keep the cost of the project as low as possible, so certainly if culverts were sufficient, we would have installed culverts.

Ms RATTRAY - I think it is important to put that on the record, because that is what somebody will ask me, 'Why didn't they use large culverts? We never get that much water.' Hopefully we may do in the future.

CHAIR - While others are thinking about what else they might like to ask, I will take the opportunity to ask about roundabout signage. I was down at Kingston the other day on the Huon Highway, that dangerous intersection that has just been remediated by putting in a flyover and all the rest of it. Coming back from Kingston and going to Hobart on Summerleas Road, I got there and I thought where is the direction to Hobart? I happen to know reasonably well where I was likely to be going but there was no sign that said 'Hobart' this way. It said, 'Summerleas' that way.

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It did not have a double sign that said Summerleas/Hobart and you are underneath the bridge by that stage. If you were a tourist, you would not know where to go.

Ms RATTRAY - Or if you are a northern member.

CHAIR - Or a northern member, but sometimes southern members can be bamboozled by the new roundabouts. Given that this roundabout now, if you think about it, has six arms to it, the signage might be quite a significant issue in how you are directing traffic. Can you give me an understanding as to what sort of signage is going in at that site and how you think that might work?

Mr CONFORTI - A design was done for the signage of the whole area and it has been considerably reviewed and the scope of the sign has been extended. It goes well over the area of the project because it takes into consideration also that once the new link road is there, we want that people travelling on the old Richmond Road, the one that goes from Cambridge to the junction that we are constructing. There has been an enormous amount of work done around signs, as I said, not just immediately in the vicinity of the project but extensively in all directions from the airport and from Acton and all the rest. I anticipate that the cost of signage in the area will be very high just to make sure that everything works.

CHAIR - You will have 'No Entry' signs too, will you? Obviously coming into that site, a major ramp comes up to that point from the highway travelling east. You also have a two-way coming in from Cambridge itself and then another three points.

Mr CONFORTI - No, as I said there will be plenty of signs from all directions and the design has been reviewed; I cannot foresee any problems to find a way around that area.

CHAIR - The reason I ask the question is we have many tourists, a significant number of whom come from places where they drive on the right-hand side of the road and not the left and they may indeed go around a roundabout the wrong way, so the No Entry signs are absolutely imperative for people.

Mr CONFORTI - There will be adequate road signs and tourist signs in all the area.

CHAIR - You will take into account someone going the wrong way around a roundabout?

Mr CONFORTI - Absolutely, we did.

CHAIR - Okay. Thank you for that. I raised the size of cycling shoulder during the site inspection; it is 1.5 metres. Can you put on the record why that size was chosen I think under the law we always have to provide a 1.5-metre distance between cars and the cyclists. One-and-a-half metres will put them on the ropes. I would interested to hear the rationale about the 1.5-metre shoulder.

Ms RATTRAY - Luke is the cycling expert and is about to enlighten us.

CHAIR - Who uses that road, I believe.

Mr MIDDLETON - From time to time, yes - usually early on a Sunday morning. AustRoads guidelines recommend 1.4 metres for cycling space on our road network. We have gone a little bit

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further and given 1.5 metres. The passing safely distance you referred to is new, but there has always been a requirement to overtake only when safe to do so and that still applies.

CHAIR - Common sense, in other words?

Mr MIDDLETON - It is incumbent upon a motorist to comply with all the laws applicable to driving a car.

CHAIR - Is that 1.4 metres you were saying an Australian Standard? Do you know whether other states a 1.5-metre clearance when passing a cyclist? Is that standard in their law or is it only Tasmania?

Mr MIDDLETON - Not every jurisdiction in Australia has that law. I know Victoria does not although they are currently looking at making it an advisory criterion, but most of the mainland states, I believe, have adopted it as a requirement.

Ms BUTLER - On our drive today when we were heading towards Malcolms Hut Road, there was a small bridge and the area for cycling would have been minimised to nothing whilst going across it, so there is not actually a space there for a bike to stay safely there, which would mean there would have to be a stop in the traffic. Has that particular section been looked into and what that might cause? You have that here, and then you go up straight towards a hill, and a driver coming down the hill might not see bike riders. I don't know how cycle-friendly that road will end up being when you are having sections where there will be no room for cyclists. I think it is important we have that on the record. I am keen to know if there have been any investigations or safety assessments done in relation to how cyclists and cars could navigate that space together.

Mr MIDDLETON - Again, speaking from my personal experience as someone who rides the road, those bridges you talk about are just one of the constraints that exist along that road. The fact that we're going to end up with an edge line and a 1.5 metre shoulder outside that edge line for the majority of the route now between Malcolms Hut and Cambridge is a big safety improvement. To replace those five bridges - because we wouldn't be able to widen them and a number of them are fairly old - is an expenditure the department is no doubt going to have to grapple with in future, but it is not something covered within the budget of this project. If we were to try to do that, we wouldn't be upgrading as far as the project envisages going. For those short distances, it is already like that now. Again, as a cyclist, we trust motorists a hell of a lot; we trust them to do the right thing and overtake safely, as they are required to do now. We will still be doing that with the widened shoulder.

Ms RATTRAY - We talked earlier about the six slow vehicle pull-off areas that are not signed or defined -

CHAIR - Lay bys.

Ms RATTRAY - Are they called lay bys?

CHAIR - I think they are.

Ms RATTRAY - The six lay by areas - and we had a discussion around adequate signage for those because sometimes people don't realise they have that opportunity coming up and tend to overtake unnecessarily before they perhaps should and then realise they have just gone past a slow

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vehicle lay by area. I am interested in the signage. I know you took that question on notice this morning, Stefano, so I wonder if you have an answer.

Mr CONFORTI - Yes, I had the opportunity to talk with the designer because I remember we had the same discussion for section 2 which was recently completed. Basically, those lay by or pull-over areas are really totally informal in the sense that they don't apply any design standard for roads and are just an opportunity for the local agricultural vehicles to temporarily pull over. Because they don't apply any traffic standard, we don't want to encourage anyone to actually use them apart from the locals. That is what I was told. The local tractor driver knows that on Richmond Road, there are probably cars behind them so they would pull over and let them go past, but -

Ms RATTRAY - Why would you waste good seal on them then, if you're not going to encourage people to use them?

Mr CONFORTI - As I say, we encourage the locals rather than any other vehicles. They're not really overtaking lanes or stopping lanes. In fact, if you look at section 2, you can hardly see that area. There is no line marking to show that there is a wider area; it is just for local traffic.

CHAIR - If they're in the know and the farmer is moving a hay baler or a harvester of some description, they are aware these areas exist; if they see a lot of people behind them, they'll pull over and let people pass?

Mr CONFORTI - Yes, that is exactly the intention.

CHAIR - That is the intent of them, rather than tourists pulling over and letting people past or whatever?

Mr CONFORTI - Yes.

Ms BUTLER - If there were an opportunity to turn that into a proper slowdown lane - I know that many people who commute from Richmond to town get stuck behind traffic on that road. It is something locals often complain about. Being a local member for Richmond, I am sure the community would appreciate an opportunity for a lane where they might have a chance to get around other traffic. There may be older people or tourists who like travelling at a slower pace, so it would be great if that could be considered to decrease the commute time for people who choose to commute from Richmond to Hobart on a daily basis.

Mr CONFORTI - I think similarly to the conversation we had about the bridges, if we had to put in proper overtaking lanes, we would have to stretch and elongate them much more than what the pull-over bays are now. They would also be much wider, so there would be acquisitions and it would be another project altogether. The scope of the project would be completely different. As I understand it, it is a safety project rather than improving traffic viability.

CHAIR - Wouldn't having a sign like 'Slow vehicle lay by', for instance, give a bit of a hint that this is where you go if you want to travel slowly? Are you saying that might create safety issues in itself?

Mr CONFORTI - Yes, exactly. For example, if a B-double had to pull off there, the length of the area wouldn't be sufficient for the truck to go in and out safely.

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CHAIR - So you would encourage them to do something that is not feasible, in effect?

Mr CONFORTI - Yes, we encourage the agricultural slow traffic rather than -

CHAIR - Rather than general traffic.

Mr CONFORTI - A B-double would go 80 kilometres an hour and that pull-over area is not designed for the time and space it would need to pull off and come back in.

Ms RATTRAY - Wouldn't it be more prudent, then, to have fewer of them and have just, say, two that are actually designated, instead of having six where we can pull over here and we can pull over here and we can pull over here, but if you had one on the left and one on the right, doesn't that solve it? You would have two designated ones instead of these six mismatched ones. Isn't that something to consider?

Mr CONFORTI - Three each side in 3.3 kilometres is one every kilometre. Maybe those pull-over areas already exist, but are just unsealed. We are just going to seal mainly what is existing.

Ms RATTRAY - We could probably talk about this all day because it is one of the areas I really would like to explore.

CHAIR - Especially on the east coast drive, or whatever it is called.

Ms RATTRAY - The Great Eastern Drive.

CHAIR - I have a question with regard to the cycleway under the bridge, can you provide us with an understanding as to how negotiations with councils happened with that, what their response was and what their intention is maybe, just for the record?

Mr MIDDLETON - The council approached us through Cycling South regarding the issue of making some provision at the bridge structures for an extension of the Barilla Rivulet pathway that they had highlighted as a plan within the Cambridge master plan.

CHAIR - So is that to get cyclists off the main highway when travelling say through to places like Port Arthur or whatever? Or is it to handle cyclists who might be flying in with their bike and having somewhere safer to go rather than being on the main highway?

Mr MIDDLETON - No, the council is looking at the pathway. It runs along Barilla Rivulet basically from the primary school or the oval, more as a recreational trail. Not just cyclists but walkers as well, just to give them a loop. I think the intention is to get it down to Backhouse Lane which is just to the east and they will be able to do a loop back by the Kennedy Drive and Cambridge Road interconnect.

CHAIR - So it is not part of the greater Tasmanian cycling route? It is a local cycling project?

Mr MIDDLETON - Very much. It is the council's view that it is a recreational trail.

CHAIR - Has there been any discussion with council with respect to any infrastructure that it may need for lighting and those sorts of things going under that bridge? Has there been any

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discussion about infrastructure the council may need and burying that at the same time as the construction is happening? Can you enlighten us on that score?

Mr MIDDLETON - We have certainly talked to them about the pavement under there. There will be a concrete pathway put through. They have not raised the issue of lighting at all. It would be fairly difficult to design it in now, I would imagine, but it would be simple to attach lighting in the future should they think it is needed under there.

CHAIR - It probably would be solar.

Ms RATTRAY - Put a power point in.

CHAIR - Can you cover the slip-road construction that is mentioned, what its purpose is in main part, why that is being put in and any issues you might see being encountered?

Mr CONFORTI - That is the slip-lane at the roundabout?

CHAIR - At the southern roundabout of this project.

Mr CONFORTI - That is to reduce the amount of cars heading to approach the roundabout. We will basically facilitate the flow of traffic from that direction.

CHAIR - It could be traffic coming out of the industrial parks or out of Cambridge Park itself, and it can virtually move straight through providing the cars have the right of way over the bridge and into town.

Mr CONFORTI - Exactly.

CHAIR - The wording used in 4.1 is interesting - 'provide the preferred procurement method'. You have construction works that will be procured under a single construct-only contract. I thought all of them were construct only. I am wondering what other types of contracts we have. I appreciate that is just my ignorance,.

Mr BOURNE - That would be as opposed to a design and construct contract where the contractor is appointed to do both the design and the construction.

CHAIR - Okay, that is fine. In the circumstance where you design and construct, I suppose that lifts the complexity a bit in terms of risks. Who has designed this, for instance? Obviously not that person who is constructing it. Do you keep a separation for a reason? Can you explain that?

Mr BOURNE - I guess for a design and construct contract, you set a list of requirements that might be fairly broad and general performance requirements. You then leave it to the contractor to appoint a design consultant and come up with a design that meets those requirements, but you lose some control on exactly what it looks like.

The alternative - and there are good reasons to use each model of the procurement - the alternative is to design the work fully to your requirements and then seek tenders for only constructing the works to your design. That shifts the risk profile between the parties.

CHAIR - The financial analysis on page -

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Ms RATTRAY - I have a question on 4.2, Chair. Under the 'Prepare tender documents, March 2019', are they ready to go?

Mr CONFORTI - The tender will be ready to go in May and so that is the timing to prepare the tender documentation.

Ms RATTRAY - So March/April is the 'prepare'. We do not have much left of March, I presume you have those underway to be able to get them completed by April, which is only about four weeks or thereabouts and then tender -

Mr CONFORTI - The timing for the project is on target at this stage.

Ms RATTRAY - You are on track to meet those timelines that are there?

Mr CONFORTI - Yes.

CHAIR - The 5.1.1 financial year cashflow - I think there needs to be a little bit of an inspection of the figures there.

Ms RATTRAY - Yes, because I could not even work out how many millions and trillions that is.

CHAIR - There are two mistakes you will find. Clearly, the first one is the total, \$18 521, which has somehow become mixed with the \$215 000. I assume that is an error. It should be \$215 000 under 'Scoping', under the total, and on 'Delivery', the total is not \$15 617 000, it is \$15 774 000, giving a total of \$18 521 000. There is a mistake in that table; do we acknowledge that?

Mr CONFORTI - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you. The next table down, 5.1.2 - quite clearly. it is a spreadsheet error or something, the project phase cashflow is exactly \$18 520 000, not \$18 521 000.

Mr CONFORTI - Where are we again, sorry?

CHAIR - The project phase cashflow, committed funding. I think the mistake is that scoping should be \$215 000, not \$214 000. Is that correct?

Mr CONFORTI - Yes.

CHAIR - Do we agree with that?

Mr CONFORTI - Yes.

CHAIR - Because that makes it the same as the one up the top. That is an error. You might want to correct this. The total of \$18 520 000 will then become \$18 521 000, if that scoping is \$215 000.

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It has 'Historic' underneath it. Is this just an old estimate? Is that why it has 'Historic' written underneath 'Scoping' under 'Committed Funding' on 5.1.2?

Mr CONFORTI - I am assuming this from past financial years because this project started a while ago.

CHAIR - But those figures do not match - \$214 000 for scoping, \$2 532 000 for development and \$15 774 for delivery adds up to \$18 520 000, not \$18 521 000. I suggest, and correct me if I am wrong, that \$214 000 should be \$215 000.

Mr CONFORTI - Yes.

CHAIR - Why does it have 'Historic' under it? Can somebody explain what that means?

Mr CONFORTI - I think \$215 000 was spent on this project last financial year and that \$215 000 is a carry-forward expense we have already.

CHAIR - The figure above 'Historic' is an incorrect figure and should be \$215 000.

Mr CONFORTI - Yes.

CHAIR - You might need to adjust that. The anticipated total out-turn cost-break under 5.1.3. You have various P50 and P90 figures. It is an interesting one; I might talk about it later in committee. Further down, under 5.3, it talks about escalation rates used, and says - 'provide details of the escalation rate used and the source and justification for those rates'. In the last sentence you go on to talk about the recommended escalation rate being 3 per cent and 6 per cent respectively. I assume that they are round figures because P90 is actually 5.4 per cent without the contingency and yet you are saying it is 6 per cent. They do not quite jell.

Mr BOURNE - The recommended escalation rates are a series of values. They might be 3.52 per cent. As you say, not exactly, just rounded off there, and that applies over a number of years. We applied those in a spreadsheet format but these have been rounded off.

CHAIR - It is rounded off?

Mr BOURNE - Yes. We could adjust that to relate the exact figures used, if that is preferred.

CHAIR - Is this a probabilistic Monte Carlo-type evaluation.

Mr BOURNE - Yes, it is.

Ms RATTRAY - Can we ask about that contingency? The difference between P50 and P90?

Mr BOURNE - What would you like to know?

Ms RATTRAY - The others are not that dissimilar, but this one has a considerable jump in the contingency figures.

CHAIR - It is \$3.8 million more than the risk level. It is 90 per cent of the estimates. That P90 means 90 per cent of the estimates are going to be over, 10 per cent under.

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Ms RATTRAY - Right, and that is why there is the big difference.

Mr SHELTON - It is the risk profile.

CHAIR - The risk increases.

Mr BOURNE - That is correct.

CHAIR - I am proud of myself.

Mr BOURNE - That recognises the level of risk identified in what things could go wrong and what the financial consequences of those would be. We would manage to avoid those and our estimate of what is most likely is represented in the P50 but the P90 is what could go wrong.

CHAIR - So P50 means 50 per cent are likely to be over and 50 per cent under.

Ms RATTRAY - How come the base estimate is spot on?

Mr BOURNE - Because that is the starting point. That is the estimate of the construction cost as we know it and the contingency represents the things we are unsure about.

CHAIR - Are you aware, just out of interest, that with this project you are crossing over the old Sorell to Hobart rail line? Did anyone tell you that?

Ms RATTRAY - You can't. They are a corridor, they are protected.

CHAIR - I think it stopped being a rail corridor in the 1920s or 1930s or something like that. A railway line used to go up that valley from Penna Point, Shark Point actually, across a causeway which is still there, and travelled through to Kangaroo Point just across the river. An interesting one.

Mr BOURNE - It is those sorts of things that could lead to a contingency item, but we will look into that if it has not already been investigated.

CHAIR - I was just thinking if the Government were of a mind to put in a light rail system that is the line they would use, so you might find there might be a railway line goes across this in the future.

Ms RATTRAY - We have a piece of legislation called the Strategic Infrastructure Corridors (Strategic and Recreational Use) Act.

CHAIR - Anyway, I just wondered whether you were aware of that. It is just a bit of knowledge I have of the area. I do not wish to hold you up too much further. I think that is pretty well it from me.

Ms RATTRAY - That's all I have, Chair.

CHAIR - You provided us with a document on the *juncus amabilis*. When is the Heritage Council actually consulted during all of this? Is it as soon as you discover there is an issue?

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Mr CONFORTI - Yes, it is already two months back; I cannot remember the exact date, but it must have been close to September 2018 or around that time.

CHAIR - Do we, as a government, have an Aboriginal heritage officer who actually goes and investigates these things? How does that happen?

Mr CONFORTI - In this case we would have had an external consultant who provided us with a very extensive report, of which the page circulating is just one page.

CHAIR - If we can get hold of the report.

Ms RATTRAY - In regard to letting the community know where the project is at: I called in to get some fuel when I arrived this morning and the gentleman at the servo very helpfully showed me where I needed to be. He had a nice map that Pitt & Sherry and Andrew Fowler had provided to him. He was certainly concerned about his business and any impacts on his business in the future. Does the department go back to the community and say, 'This is what we've settled on; these are the time lines, and there is around a two-year construction phase.'? Does that happen or is that going to happen with this?

Mr CONFORTI - We have consulted with the whole community at large; we then start concentrating on those who are immediately -

Ms RATTRAY - Are directly affected, yes.

Mr CONFORTI - affected. On our website we update the progress of the project continuously. We provide that website to the public. We continue to talk to the people around that area before and during construction, but as far as we understand, we don't intend to go back to the wider community.

Ms RATTRAY - Just something to let the community know that perhaps once the tender has been let and this is the construction time, or expected commencement date, just so they have some understanding. There might be a small local paper that does a delivery or something, a school newsletter -

Mr CONFORTI - We do very often use local newsletters.

Ms RATTRAY - I think it is really good to keep the community informed when it is going to be something that will affect people, but also, too, that there is going to be some disruption and a lot more activity over a long course of time.

Mr CONFORTI - In addition to that, we have the visible signs along the road as we saw today which normally give the date from when to when for the site.

Mr BOURNE - We're using social media more extensively now to communicate those works.

Ms RATTRAY - Thank you.

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CHAIR - Thank you for coming in. There are a few questions I need to ask you before you depart. The first one is: do the proposed works meet an identified need or needs or solve a recognised problem?

Mr BOURNE - Yes.

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

Mr BOURNE - Yes.

CHAIR - Do the proposed works provide value for money?

Mr BOURNE - Yes.

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

Mr BOURNE - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr SHELTON - I don't know what we'd do if any of those answers were 'no'.

CHAIR - Well, we'd have to go from there, wouldn't we? As I advised you at the commencement of this hearing, what you have said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table, you need to be aware that privilege does not attach to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you are just repeating what you said to us. Do you understand that?

Messrs CONFORTI, BOURNE and MIDDLETON - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you very much for coming.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.