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PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

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PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

## **Esk Main Road, East of Killymoon Bridge – Road Reinstatement**

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*Brought up by Mr Best and ordered by the House of Assembly to be printed.*

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### MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

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HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Mr *Best*  
Mrs *Napier*  
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## INTRODUCTION

The Committee has the honour to report to the House of Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1914 on the -

### Esk Main Road, East of Killymoon Bridge – Road Reinstatement

## BACKGROUND

The Esk Main Road is the principal link between the Midland Highway and Tasman Highway on the East Coast. It carries a significant number of heavy vehicles and is widely used by tourists. The road is managed by the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources (DIER).

The Fingal Valley railway line terminates at Fingal. East of Fingal, Esk Main Road thus must carry all the land transport and its importance within the Tasmanian road network is recognised by its classification as a Category 2 - Regional Freight Road within the Tasmanian Road Hierarchy.

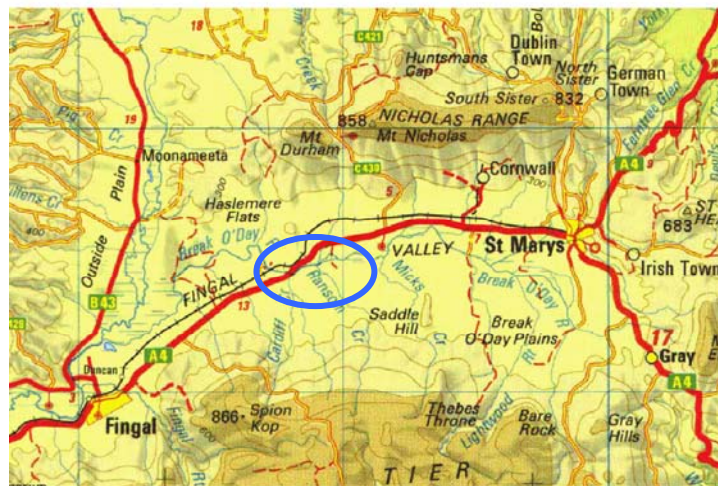
In 1997–98 DIER undertook a planning study to determine a strategy for the management and development of Esk Main Road. One of the outcomes of that study was the identification of two projects covering the section of Esk Main Road east of Killymoon Bridge. The first project was to widen the sealed width from 6.0 metres to 8.0 metres while the second involved the strengthening of the road pavement to cater for the current and predicted traffic loadings.

These two projects were combined, together with some safety issues specific to the site, to constitute the reference the subject of this report.

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the project were detailed in the submission of DIER as follows:

- Reduce high maintenance costs
- Improve safety
- Improve ride quality
- Provide greater overtaking opportunities



**Figure 1**  
**Project Location**

## PROJECT LOCATION

The project is located in the Fingal Valley on the Esk Main Road approximately midway between Fingal and St Marys.

## PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

The justification for this project derives from the safety improvements, reduction in the current high maintenance costs and improvement in the operation of the road. These main issues are detailed below.

### SAFETY BENEFITS

The proposed project incorporates significant safety improvements for the road users as follows:

- increased stopping sight distance to 100 km/h standard for users travelling along the road;
- increased safe intersection sight distance to 100 km/h standard for users of the accesses to the road;
- a wider pavement with sealed shoulders reducing the likelihood of run-off-the-road crashes;
- the removal of roadside hazards reducing the severity of run-off-the-road crashes; and
- the installation of safety barriers.

### MAINTENANCE COST SAVINGS

The proposed project will significantly reduce the recurrent pavement maintenance cost through:

- increased strength of the pavement using a granular overlay, and
- improvement to the pavement drainage system reducing the rate of pavement deterioration.

### ROAD USER BENEFITS

In addition to the road safety benefits road users will derive benefits from the following:

- improved ride quality by the reduction in road roughness, and
- reduced length of barrier lines by approximately 48% to be approximately 22% of the project length.

## THE EXISTING SITUATION

### The Road

The design speed is well below the posted speed limit of 100km/h for all horizontal curves. The stopping sight distances are also deficient for the posted speed limit.

The vertical alignment of the existing Highway is generally very flat with local crests and gullies that have insufficient sight distance for the posted 100km/h speed limit. These crests limit the ability for motorists to overtake.

The current road level is susceptible to low level flooding.

Because of the generally flat terrain the drainage is relatively poor and obviously creating problems in the pavement layers. The pavement was reconstructed in 1963 and not long after in 1964 extensive cracking was reported. The first 1.0 kilometre of the section was reconstructed in 1970. In 1978 the entire length of the link was asphalted. The road was resealed a number of times in the early 1980's.

The current pavement condition has extensive patching, often with deformation and cracking around patch edges, over the first 1.3 kilometres. The outer wheel paths are generally in poorer condition than the inner wheel paths. There appears to be a correlation between the underlying geological conditions and the pavement condition. Figure 2 shows a typical section of the pavement in the first 1.3 kilometres.



Figure 2  
Existing Pavement

## Traffic Conditions

### Traffic Data

Traffic Characteristic	Value
Traffic Flow (two way)	1230 per day
Percentage trucks	10.2%
Traffic growth rate	0.9% per annum

### Crashes

There has been one recorded crash on the section in the 5-year period up to the end of December 2003. This crash was a single vehicle run off the road property damage

crash. The vehicle collided with a fence. The crash rate was 18 per 100 million vehicle kilometres travelled or 0.4 crashes per kilometre. Both these measures are in the low to medium range for crash rates on equivalent roads in Tasmania.

### The Road Side

The abutting land use is rural, used for grazing and is effectively in two ownerships. Most of the land is cleared with some trees along the roadside and creek lines and a few scattered in the paddocks. The typical roadside environment along Esk Main Road is open vistas across the agricultural land to the wooded foothills and the mountains beyond.

The land is zoned rural under the Break O'Day Planning Scheme. The Planning Scheme includes a provision relating to works within 30 metres from a watercourse. This provision will come into effect at the approaches to Killymoon Bridge requiring the lodgement of a Development Application with Council.

No sites of Aboriginal cultural heritage value have been identified in the project area.

A flora and fauna habitat survey has identified four black gums (*Eucalyptus ovata*) within the project area and a further 20 just east of the project area. These were the only plants identified with environmental value in the project area. The four trees are approximately 4 metres from the edge of the existing seal and within the clear zone thus constituting a safety hazard. Black gums are used by Swift Parrots as a food source when their preferred source blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*) is unavailable, particularly during the breeding season.

The survey also identified a number of weed species in the project area including hawthorn, willow, blackberry and ivy.

An Historic Heritage assessment of the site identified the following items as having some value:

- The hawthorn trees along the fence lines,
- The gates to Killymoon,
- The mile post near Killymoon Bridge, and
- The old abutments at Millstream Creek probably associated with an earlier Millstream Creek Bridge.

There is an Aurora line comprising 27 poles on the southern side of the road. The poles are located at various offsets from the road with the minimum being approximately 5 metres. There are 4 stay poles on the northern side of the road.

There are two Telstra crossings of the road which serve local properties. The major trunk cables including the optic fibre cable are located on the northern side of the road well outside the road reserve.

There is a stream gauge attached to the Killymoon Bridge.

## THE PROJECT

### Proposed Works

The proposed works involve the reinstatement of the road pavement and the widening of the road through the construction and sealing of the shoulders. The proposed works essentially follow the existing road and include the regrading of a number of crests to improve sight distance.

The roadworks comprise:

- Widening of the sealed pavement from the current width of just less than 6.0 metres to two 3.0 metre lanes and a 1.0 metre shoulder on both sides,
- Strengthening of the pavement to cater for the anticipated traffic loading for the next 20 years,
- Improvement of the vertical alignment of the road to provide for an operating speed of 100 km/h,
- Improvements to the drainage to firstly limit the ability of water to enter the pavement layers and secondly provide flood protection such that the road will not be covered in water in a once in 50 year recurrence interval storm,
- Improvement to the safety barriers particularly at Killymoon Bridge and the culverts.

The project includes the widening of the road to provide two 3.0 metre wide lanes and a 1.0 metre wide sealed shoulder on both sides. The proposed upgrading of the road width is consistent with the section near Ormley which was upgraded several years ago.

### Specific Design Issues

The proposed works include the following:

- Full depth pavement widening of the road on the northern side of the existing road to limit the amount of acquisition:
- A 200mm base overlay on the existing pavement;
- An initial primerseal for the first 12 months life span of the pavement;
- The primerseal will require a reseal, with a life expectancy of 10-15yrs, within 12months of the initial treatment;
- Extension to all existing culverts;
- Improvement of the alignment of the road to provide stopping sight distance for a speed of 100km/h;
- Improvement of the alignment of the road to enable the length of barrier line on the road to be reduced from 48% of the length to 22% of the length for a speed of 100km/h; and
- Improvements to the drainage to firstly limit the ability of water to enter the pavement layers and secondly provide flood protection such that the road will not be covered in water in a once in 50 year recurrence interval storm.

By using a 200mm overlay the table drains will be deepened proportionately to the depth of overlay, and hence will improve the current poor drainage issue.



**Figure 3**  
**Section Of Esk Main Road Previously Upgraded**  
**To The Same Standard As Proposed For This**  
**Project**

### Estimated Costs

The cost of the works has been estimated based on historical rates for similar works delivered by DIER in recent years. The main components of the cost are as follows:-

Cost Area	Estimated Cost (thousands)
Project Specific	\$368
Earthworks	\$288
Drainage	\$136
Pavement	\$895
Bituminous Surfacing	\$95
Traffic Facilities	\$142
Landscaping	\$84
Miscellaneous	\$46
Sub-Total	\$2,054
DIER Costs	\$50
Professional Fees	\$314
Acquisition	\$40
Contingency	\$242
<b>Project Total:</b>	<b>\$2,700</b>

### Environmental and Social Implications

## Environmental Issues

There will be limited impact on the natural or built environment by the proposed works. The following processes and actions will be incorporated into the project:

- The weed areas will be identified and requirements for treatment of the various declared weeds included in the tender documents.
- It will be necessary to remove four individual black gums as these are located within the clear zone and thus constitute a safety risk to road users. The removal of these few trees is not expected to have a significant impact on the Swift Parrot. The works do not affect the row of 20 black gums just east of the site.
- The widening of the road on the northern side will require the removal of the Hawthorns on that side of the road. Hawthorns are regarded as an environmental weed but these particular plants have two positive attributes. They provide food for green Rosellas and they form part of the cultural landscape setting for this part of the Fingal Valley. Following consultation with the Tasmanian Heritage Council it has been agreed that affected Hawthorns are to be replanted.
- As no Aboriginal heritage sites were identified the provisions in the DIER Standard construction specifications are considered adequate.
- The concrete mile post will be relocated to an appropriate position clear of the works but still visible to road users.
- An extensive subsurface investigation has been undertaken to determine the foundation conditions at Millstream Creek. This investigation has revealed that the soils in the vicinity of the creek are very soft and subject to settlement over time. Consequently the only feasible method to widen the structure is to join the culvert extension to the existing culvert so both the existing culvert and the extension settle as a single entity. This will require the removal of the old stone abutments. An extant survey of these abutments will be undertaken prior to construction, in accordance with a verbal agreement reached with the Tasmanian Heritage Council. A copy of the completed survey will be lodged with the Tasmanian Heritage Council.
- The proposed widening on the northern side will move the road slightly further away from the “Killymoon” gates and keep them in service. The necessary changes to the access to cater for large vehicles which are now used to service the property and to provide a lower risk of damage to the gates have been developed in consultation with the landowners and the Tasmanian Heritage Council.
- All sites with environmental values will have environmental protection erected around them at the start of the contract.

## Public Consultation

This project is the result of an extensive public consultation process for the Esk Main Road planning study and all potentially affected property owners have been contacted and have been asked for input into the process.



The Department has developed a specific Public Contact Plan for the project. The implementation of this plan will ensure that all stakeholders affected by the project are fully informed of the impact on them.

There have been discussions with the affected property owners to determine what accommodation works are necessary and to enable acquisition of the necessary land. Every effort has been made to ensure that individual concerns have been addressed.

#### Property Matters

The works will only impact on two property owners. Both have been consulted and they accept the proposed acquisition.

The accesses to the abutting properties will be adjusted to facilitate the construction of the roadworks and to ensure that each access has adequate sight distance. The access to the historic property Killymoon includes the gates. These gates are significant in themselves. As mentioned above changes to this access are being developed in consultation with the Tasmanian Heritage Council.

#### Break O'Day Council

The Break O'Day Planning Scheme includes a schedule listing environmental weeds. Hawthorn is included in the Schedule. While the Schedule is not activated for developments in the Rural Zone, during discussions with Council officers they indicated that Council is likely to want the Hawthorns removed. This desire conflicts with the requirements of the Tasmanian Heritage Council to reinstate the roadside Hawthorns.

The Historic Cultural Heritage Act was enacted in 1995 with the Land Use Planning and Approvals Act being enacted in 1993. The former Act i.e. the Historic Cultural Heritage Act will take precedence and therefore also the requirements of the Tasmanian Heritage Council to reinstate the Hawthorns will override any requirement by the Break O'Day Council to remove the Hawthorns as environmental weeds. Apart from this issue it is anticipated that the Break O'Day Council will approve the Development Application.

#### Planning Approval

The project area is located in the Break O'Day Municipality and within the jurisdiction of the Break O'Day Planning Scheme 1996. A Development Application has been lodged with the Break O'Day Council seeking a Planning Permit for the project. This process provides the local community with a formal opportunity to raise concerns and provide comments and input to the project in addition to the consultation undertaken as part of the design development processes.

## EVIDENCE

The Committee commenced its inquiry on Wednesday, 2 February last with an inspection of the site of the proposed works. The Committee then proceeded to the

St. Marys Town Hall whereupon the following witnesses appeared, made the Statutory Declaration and were examined by the Committee in public:-

- Gunadasa Ginneliya - Project Manager, DIER
- Brian Williams - Design Project Manager, Pitt & Sherry
- Michael Pollington - Environmental Officer, Pitt & Sherry

## Background

Mr Ginneliya provided the Committee with the following background of the project:-

*The history of this project goes back to the period 1997-98. At that time the department consulted with the minister to do a planning study of the Esk corridor because the Esk Main Road being a major link between the Midland and Tasman highways there was the need for the department at that time to assess its requirement for the future transport road in this area. As part of that study the engineers did an assessment in terms of social, economic and environmental issues. They looked at the condition of the pavement at that time - the deficiencies; how it can be improved - then looked at those scenarios in terms of freight and other social and economic issues and then come up with a strategy for the future, a 10 to 20-year period... At that time they also required surveys, they looked at risk factors and they looked at the main issues that needed to be considered and at the end of that study they came up with a set of 15 projects which were identified. I have a copy of the planning study that was done at that time. It identified 15 major projects which have to be dealt with from that time.*

*As part of that study they also did an economic benefit/cost benefit analysis and ranked all the priorities which should be implemented. Some of those projects have already been implemented. When you were driving on the road you must have seen that the junction with the Midland highway has been upgraded and you must have seen the wide shoulders and the edge lines and the new seal. That is part of those 15 projects and this became the next one to be included. In addition to that we realised that the existing pavement condition of this part of the project is in very poor shape and it needs immediate attention. The economic infrastructure fund our minister delivered in the last Budget, which was about \$18 million over the next three years, included as part of this package so the funding for this one came from the economic infrastructure fund and it is about \$2.5 million to do about 2.5 kilometres of road. The figure we have given in the report is \$2.7 million so there is a minor shortfall but we will be able to manage with the State fund to meet that shortfall.*

*The next stage of the continuation of the Esk Main Road development will be to do a further widening and improvement between Avoca and Fingal. It is about 15 kilometres. We have just started the design and that is the main part of that assessed by the planning study and myself for the project. We have earmarked about \$7.5 million for that project. What I am saying is that it is a continuation of the Esk Main Road development for a period of time.*

Because we had extensive public consultation at the time of the planning study we did not feel that there was a need to have further community consultation but we have prepared a flyer to be given to the community. As soon as this process is completed we will be distributing this leaflet to the community organisations and various interested groups, schools et cetera, describing what we are planning to do with this project and providing the basics of what we are trying to achieve, what has been done and how we initiated the project.

As we explained, the major improvements are to improve safety, to improve quality by providing better pavement - greater strength of the pavement - and to improve sight distance of the accesses. In addition to that, our maintenance budget will reduce. Those are the major things we are trying to achieve by doing this project. The other will be minor: road acquisition on the northern side - a 10 to 20 metre strip. We have had discussions with landowners for the land acquisition. Notice to treat was served on 21 January and so far no issues have been raised, so will assume that within the 30-day period, which is 22 February, the land will be vested in the crown's authority and we will not have any major issues in terms of land

## **Project definition**

Mr Williams provided the Committee with the detail of the project:-

The department has classified this section of Esk Main Road from Fingal to St Marys as a category 2 or reasonable freight road. They consider it to be an important road for freight. One of the reasons it has that classification is that there is no alternative for heavy freight from the section from Fingal towards the Midland Highway for rail as well so the classification changes. That category 2 classification has some implications for design about what speed and width you should adopt and the project design has been prepared on that basis.

I will give a quick summary of the existing road. As we saw on the site inspection, the pavement is deteriorating quite quickly and this is mainly due to the thinness of the pavement and the poorer quality of the pavement materials. They are just not strong enough to carry the heavy loads. As Guna also mentioned, that is pushing the maintenance expenditure up and that is fairly undesirable from the long-term point of view. We have done a fair bit of investigation into what the pavement is like there. There are quite a few holes in the pavement and there is quite a bit of testing to assist us in preparing an appropriate design. The design standard in terms of how fast you can travel, say, is also a fair bit below that pertaining for a category 2 road. The total for a category 2 road is 100 kilometres an hour design speed. On a couple of those crests you can see appropriately from about 40 kilometres an hour, so they are really quite tight. The horizontal alignment is not too bad, but it is the vertical; you can't really see far enough over the crest. The project addresses those issues.

The width of the road is also deficient. It has just under 6 metres in width and the shoulders - what there are of them - are unsealed and in some places are almost

non-existent. So you have very little margin for error and there are a few instances where trees and other things that are hazardous are too close to the sealed part as well, so the overall width aspect is a problem. In the report there is a photo which shows some of the deteriorated pavement; there is also a photo in the body of the report showing what we are trying to achieve, which has taken nearly all the section that has been upgraded recently. That is the same width as we are trying to achieve here.

The proposed works are to strengthen the road, generally by placing a gravel overlay over the existing road, except for some minor patching that we need to do first, where there are dips in the seal and if we put the gravel on top of that it could form ponds of water and that will soften the new gravel. So we are going to deal with those first. Widening the road on the northern side will provide one-metre shoulders, so we effectively widen two metres on the northern side from the bridge through to this end of the job. Improvements to sight distance will be done by two main cuttings, one at about 1.6 kilometres from the bridge and one just east of Killymoon gates which we saw this morning - that is at 2.2 kilometres from the bridge. There are also some minor dips in the road if you drive it you can see little dips - and we will take them out as well by filling. So there are only two simple little cuts and the rest we will do by lifting it. That puts additional paving material on top and strengthens the road further and it also probably has less interruption to traffic while it is being done. Cutting is fairly inconvenient to traffic. If you have to pull a whole road out, lower it and then build the pavement layers back up there is a fair impact on the traffic flow during the construction, whereas filling is much easier. With pavement laying they can drive on it straightaway and it is not much of a hassle.

The widening requires the extension of three small box culverts. A couple of them are very small bridges, so they will be extensions with precast elements - two of them precast and one cast in situ. There will be a safety barrier put on each of those culverts as well. The safety barrier is deficient at the moment and we are going to put a safety barrier on both approaches to Killymoon Bridge. So there is actually a little bit of work on the western side of the bridge to try to prevent people from driving into the Break O'Day River.

Two landowners are affected by the proposal, although it is in three titles. We have had fairly extensive discussions with those landowners about their fencing, access and those sort of issues. They have seven accesses altogether and they will all be retained. A couple will be moved slightly to places where we can provide adequate sight distance for a traffic speed of 100 kph. Currently there are a couple where you can't see adequately coming out of them, so they will be moved. That will be when the new gates are redone and that sort of thing. As Gunadasa said, the landowners are fairly accepting of that acquisition and do not have any issues at all.

On the cost of the project, as Gunadasa said, we are slightly over \$2.5 million. As you would see in the submission we have an estimate there which includes a contingency of \$242 000 to allow for things that crop up in design. That estimate

was prepared on the preliminary design. When we get the final design finished there will be some refinements of that \$242 000. Hopefully it will allow for changes in contractors' rates which are fairly unpredictable at the moment.

## **Environmental impact**

Mr Pollington outlined the environmental impact of the project:-

*As indicated, environmental assessments were done as part of the planning study. For this particular job we have had site-specific Aboriginal heritage, cultural heritage and vegetation and fauna habitat assessments done. There is no Aboriginal heritage site recorded in the area. There are no places included on the National Heritage list or Commonwealth lists, but Killymoon is listed permanently on the Tasmanian Heritage Register, as indicated before, and it is also listed in the Break O'Day planning scheme - schedule 14 I think it is, in the planning scheme.*

*They are the only heritage-listed places but there are other features to be considered of heritage value that were identified in the study. These include the concrete mile posts curved sandstone abutments on a small bridge, distinctive gates of Killymoon, there are the remnants of a former culvert which was constructed of local stone, and there are roadside plantings, as we have discussed, of hawthorn. In terms of botanical values there is a remnant fringe with several isolated black gums - eucalyptus ovata trees. That community is considered to be inadequately reserved in Tasmania and is considered to be endangered. It is also a potential food source for the swift parrot, which is a nationally endangered species. In terms of non-native vegetation, as is I think obvious, there are quite a number of declared weeds - gorse, blackberry and willow - that occur. There are three environmental weeds - hawthorn, briar rose and ivy - that have been identified in the area. In terms of zoological or faunal values, the eucalyptus ovata is a potential food source for the swift parrot. The hawthorn are also a source of food for the green rosellas, as we mentioned on site.*

*In terms of impacts and management, water quality is always a potential problem and the planning includes appropriate sedimentation controls and so forth so there will be no impact on water quality. In terms of the botanical values, the remnant fringe of the eucalyptus ovata - that is the row of 20 trees that we pointed out to you on site - are just outside the area of proposed works but they will be protected by appropriate environmental fencing during construction so that they are not damaged. There will be four isolated, individual black gums within the area that will be removed. They constitute a safety risk because they will be too close to the roadside. Their removal has been discussed with the Threatened Species Unit and that removal is acceptable because they are outside the habitat and core breeding area of the swift parrot - and the safety issue is recognised. Those are the botanical values.*

*The non-native vegetation we touched on before and that relates to the hawthorns. They are regarded as environmental weeds but they have been identified as part of*

*the cultural heritage by the Heritage Council and, as mentioned, they provide a source of feed for rosellas. They are identified as weeds within the Break O'Day planning scheme so there is a conflict of interest, as indicated earlier, between the Heritage Council and the Break O'Day planning scheme and that is being currently discussed and some sort of compromise solution is being worked out between the department and those bodies with regard to that issue.*

*The removal of the black gums is not expected to have any significant impact on the swift parrots; that was discussed with the Threatened Species Unit. There will be no significant impact on Aboriginal heritage values because there are no sites identified but the usual protocols will be followed. If anything is found, work in that area will stop immediately and the matter will be referred to TALC and the Aboriginal heritage officer in the department for discussion as to what is to be done.*

*With regard to the historic heritage values, I have already mentioned the cultural heritage values of the hawthorns. The gates to Killymoon are not going to be affected, as we discussed on the site. Movement and widening of the cattle grid will be done in such a way that it will not impinge upon the gates. In fact, it will help preserve the gates and that has been discussed with the Heritage Council. Concrete mile posts are mentioned in point 1.4, I think. They will be replaced back at an appropriate spot after completion of the works. There is a stone bridge abutment on Millstream Creek. Those abutments can't be preserved. The original idea was that they might be able to be incorporated in the widened bridge but they can't be preserved for engineering purposes so, in view of that, we have had an extant study of those abutments done and that report has been lodged with the Heritage Council so that is all recorded and that one in agreement with the Heritage Council. The stone culvert and the old road formation referred to earlier is right at the eastern end of the project and won't be impinged upon by the construction. Probably the only other things that need to be mentioned are the usual things spot on in construction. All areas will be rehabilitated and waste disposal will be in accordance with Break O'Day Council requirements.*

### **Pavement construction**

The Committee questioned the witnesses regarding the construction of the new pavement, specifically as to how the unstable subsurface was to be treated. Mr Williams responded:-

*Basically how the road structure works is you have a road pavement, say, of a given thickness, you apply a load from the wheel at a point on the top of the layer and the layer spreads, so at the bottom it is more distributed, there is more supporting it, so the higher up you are above the weaker materials the more the load is spread and the less the pressure is on the weaker materials. So the weaker the ground you are putting a road over, the thicker the road pavement has to be. We have worked out how strong it is now and how much additional strength the overlay will be and we are convinced that that will provide sufficient strength to carry the anticipated loads for the next 20 years.*

## Anticipated savings in maintenance costs

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to what was the estimated reduction of maintenance costs that would result from the project. Mr Ginneliya responded:-

*Roughly for the cost of routine maintenance, which we will continue to have, such as cutting grass and clearing table drains et cetera, I reckon about \$5 000 per kilometre per year. Then we come to the pavement maintenance, which I have talked about. We can save on clearing, patching, sealing of edges, levelling of edges, shoulders, et cetera. That will be about \$8 000 to \$10 000 per kilometre for a year or so.*

*... This is an amount for a year and it can go up depending on how many patches we have. As you can see, there are many factors here because as those cracks peel open we would go back and patch them and that costs a lot of money. It is a major component.*

## Hawthorn trees

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to what negotiations had been carried out between the Break O'Day Council and the Heritage Council regarding the removal of the hawthorn trees. Mr Ginneliya responded:-

*As far as the department is concerned I can indicate that transplanting hawthorn hedges at the new fence or going without doesn't really matter to the department. We want to get the work done but we are sitting as a mediator between the Heritage Council and the Break O'Day Council. The council insisted that if we transplant the hawthorn hedges then they should be 100 metres away. They won't let you plant along the edge of the road because the council is trying to enhance the vista of the area - an open landscape for seeing hills and mountains far away. The Heritage Council said, 'No, we have a line of hawthorn hedges that give a cultural perspective'. So these are conflicting arguments in the equation, with me in between trying to mediate a compromise. Nobody wants to back down. The council said, 'As long as it is hawthorn we don't want it'. In the latest discussion we had with the Heritage Council they asked if there were a different type of hedge which is less invasive. It will do the job for us but the Break O'Day Council is concerned whether it is acceptable. That is where it stands at the moment, trying to find those native species which are less invasive and, at the same time, give some cultural effect.*

The Committee sought clarification from the witnesses as to what, if any, legislative authority the Heritage Council had to require the retention of the trees. Mr Ginneliya responded:-

*I understand that the Heritage Council have some powers to issue an injunction to stop if they feel that they are aggrieved on certain issues...*

Mr Williams added:-

*They could classify all the hedges on Esk Main Road. It is a strong step. But certainly Break O'Day Council's view when they considered the development application was that the Heritage Council didn't have any control at all.*

The Committee enquired as to whether the hawthorns could be removed, in accordance with the desire of the Break O'Day Council. Mr Ginneliya responded:-

*Yes, we could. My advice is that I should consult further and get all the people to a round table if possible and try to find a compromise.*

Mr Pollington added:-

*I think there is a dangerous precedent for other areas if the cultural landscape is preserved at the behest of the THC in this case. If you talk about cultural landscapes, things like blackberries and willows are prominent parts of cultural landscapes. In this State we are ripping out willows, so for some people that is removal of a prominent part of a cultural landscape, and blackberries are an important part of our cultural landscape. Those things have to be kept in the back of your mind.*

*The other thing is that a sterile hawthorn has been identified, but it is pink not white. There is the possibility of using something like that although some people question whether replacing a white hawthorn with a pink variety is going to preserve that landscape or change things too much.*

## DOCUMENTS TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE

The following documents were taken into evidence and considered by the Committee:

- Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources - Esk Main Road, East of Killymoon Bridge – Road Reinstatement, Submission to Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, November 2004.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The Committee was satisfied that the need for the proposed reinstatement of the section of Esk Main Road east of Killymoon Bridge was clearly established. Once completed, the works will provide the following benefits:

- Improved safety by providing increased sight distance, a wider pavement with sealed shoulders, the removal of roadside hazards and the installation of safety barrier;
- Reduced pavement maintenance costs through the improvement to the pavement drainage system and the strengthening of the pavement;
- Improved ride quality by the reduction in road roughness; and
- Reduced length of barrier lines by approximately 48% to now be approximately 22% of the project length.



The Committee received evidence in relation to the hawthorn trees which have been identified by DIER for removal. Whilst the Break O'Day Council regards these plants as pest species the Tasmanian Heritage Council is seeking to have them retained due to their perceived cultural heritage significance. The Committee was concerned that considerable time has been devoted by officers of DIER in mediating this issue when in fact the Tasmanian Heritage Council has no statutory head of power to require the retention of these trees in any event.

Accordingly, the Committee recommends the project, in accordance with the documentation submitted, at an estimated total cost of \$2,700,000.

Parliament House  
HOBART  
21 March 2005

Hon. A. P. Harriss M.L.C.  
CHAIRMAN