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THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON WEDNESDAY, 3 APRIL 2013.

COLEBROOK MAIN ROAD, RICHMOND - HEAVY VEHICLE LINK ROAD

Mr ADRIAN PAINE, SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER, TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES DIVISION, AND **Mr MARK ILES**, PROJECT MANAGER, PROJECT MANAGEMENT PLANNING AND DESIGN DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE, ENERGY AND RESOURCES, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Harriss) - Welcome, gentlemen.

Mr ILES - I will give you a bit of a history to the project. This was a commitment by the state government as part of the community roads program. We started the planning work on this almost three years ago with the initial engineering survey, Aboriginal ground survey, environmental reports, and doing some initial consultation with the Richmond community to work out an alignment and junction designs. Over that period the alignment was modified several times after complications with landowners, particularly Andrew Jones in relation to the impact on his agricultural property. Andrew is the only farmer we're impacting on. The other properties are mainly rural properties but will potentially be used for residential use.

The subsurface Aboriginal survey was done the December before last. We came across areas which had a high number of artefacts, so through consultation with the Aboriginal community, mainly the Aboriginal Land and Sea Council and Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania, we modified the junction designs at the southern end and also the alignment slightly to minimise our impacts on Aboriginal heritage.

Then we were required to acquire the housing property which we were standing on the other day. We had some public displays with the Richmond community based on the current design and alignment. Our feedback from the community has been positive in both design and alignment. We have been doing extensive consultation with all the directly impacted landowners in relation to land acquisition impacts it will have on them, and future access arrangements. We have also gone into final design [inaudible].

CHAIR - I note from the submission that the planning for this goes back a lot longer than the time frame which you have been working on. It goes back to the mid-1980s and so on. Then you have taken account of the matters related to turning into and out of the Colebrook main road. We talked on site about the Aboriginal heritage of the area and that through your most recent processes you have identified three sites of low to medium significance. I recall the words 'ground survey', so I do take it there has not been an extensive dig?

Mr ILES - No, there has. There are two parts to the Aboriginal survey. When we initiated the project we did a ground survey, which is a walk-over to identify, first, what is

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actually on the surface and, two, really looking at the landscape itself. The subsurface work was held off for nearly 18 months, mainly because of the bans at the time due to the controversies at Brighton. It was November before last when we initiated the subsurface work, with extensive work done in areas based on the ground survey. These were identified as potential areas of interest and potential areas where artefacts could be found. From that ground survey, that was what we actually thought it would be. That is when we were working with AHT and what was the Land and Sea Council at the time; we negotiated to move the alignment of the southern junction in particular to minimise our impacts as much as possible.

CHAIR - The land has been worked as agricultural land for a long period and therefore in some respect mitigates any Aboriginal significance?

Mr ILES - In the sense that the artefacts on the properties have been potentially moved from other parts of the property as a result of agricultural activity. The archaeological report has shown that the sites themselves are not of high significance from an Aboriginal heritage perspective in the sense that they are low to medium. It was area where Aboriginals passed through and may have stayed overnight because of the wetland area, but it was not an area where they were permanently camped. That was more down at the Coal River itself. It was an area they would pass through. There has been modification of the site and it was not an area they used. They would have used it on periodic basis rather than a more permanent basis.

CHAIR - You have indicated here that it will be designated 80 kph; what is the length of that link road?

Mr ILES - It is roughly 1.8 kilometres overall.

CHAIR - When they get onto Colebrook Main Road, would they be coming out at 100 kph when they link up there? Is that 100 kph when they get out onto that other road?

Mr ILES - It is where it changes. I think the 60 kph zone starts near the entrance to the oval. I think it is 80 kph and then it goes to 100 kph.

CHAIR - You have a decent, brand new road as a heavy vehicle link, so why not 100 kph?

Mr ILES - Mainly because of noise. Also, DIER's policy normally is that we change from 60 to 80 to 100 in relation to speeds. What we would not want is a 100 kph speed limit coming into that junction at Colebrook Main Road at the southern end. They will have the priority at the northern end. The idea is to give heavy vehicles a priority at the northern end so they do not have to stop. Then they have to stop at the southern end. The main reason we have done that is to maintain the entrance into the town. One of the key issues coming from the Richmond community is that they did not want a bypass. That is why we have always referred to it as a link road. Coming from the south, you would turn into it - make a left-hand turn to come in. However, from the north you will have the priority. There was a bit of pressure on us at the northern end from some of the business community to have it so you would have to make a right-hand turn to go onto the link road. However, if you were doing that, if you were driving a truck, you would take the normal route because you would only have to turn once, whereas if you had to

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make a right-hand turn onto the link road, then make a right onto Colebrook Road, it would take the whole idea of getting trucks to use it in the first place.

Mr HALL - You did not consider a roundabout there with the traffic?

Mr ILES - It was considered. When we first started this project, the first part of the consultation was based on junction design. This is even before we had an alignment. There is an alignment in the Clarence planning scheme, so it goes right back to the 1970s and 1980s when a bypass was investigated off Richmond. One of the initial designs there was potentially for a roundabout. However, one of the issues which came out of initial consultation was that a roundabout would impact on the historic entrance to the town. That came from the community itself. It would also have a lot more impact on properties. There were a number of potential concepts earlier in the piece for a roundabout.

Mr HALL - I thought, from a safety point view and slowing traffic down, it would still have worked as an entrance for the town.

Mr ILES - I do not disagree with you.

Mr HALL - Others did.

Mr ILES - In initial consultations with the rest of the community it went down like a lead balloon.

Mr HALL - Did you have any costings on that?

Mr ILES - There were no costings at all at that stage. That was part of the initial consultation of how we would design it.

Mr HALL - That is a bit of a shame, but that's the way it is.

Mr ILES - I don't disagree.

Mr BROOKS - What about lighting for that intersection? Is there any scope in there for that?

Mr PAINE - It will be lit similar to the main junction.

Mr BROOKS - Travelling south where they'll be in an 80 kph zone, with heavy trucks coming to a T-intersection, no doubt you will have appropriate signage and lighting.

Mr ILES - Yes, that's been addressed.

Mr HALL - I think each lane was 3.5 metres in width. Is there any allowance on the side for the perennial cyclists who use that area a lot?

Mr ILES - That was brought up. We have basically gone for an 8-metre cross-section. We are trying to encourage cyclists to go into the town rather than around, so we haven't given what would be a desired shoulder width for cyclists. It is still there, but not a 2-

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metre width for a cyclist. We haven't because the whole idea is to encourage cyclists to go into the town.

Mr HALL - Then turn and go up the Coal Valley.

Mr ILES - Exactly. A key issue with our consultation is not to take potential traffic away from the town, particularly from anyone who has a business there.

Mr BROOKS - While we were out on site Mr Hall indicated that the coffee shop he went to indicated a preference for it. I was doorknocking in the area late last year and there was some mixed feedback on the road and what impact it may or may not have. Could you take us through what you've done to get community feedback and what that feedback was?

Mr ILES - Since I have been involved in the project, which is almost two years, we've had two community consultation processes - public displays which were held at the Richmond hall. They usually went from 2 o'clock in the afternoon through to 7 o'clock at night, so we could get the afternoon traffic. We also had numerous meetings with the Richmond Advisory Committee, which is the committee that advises Clarence Council on planning issues. Consultant John Worsley was dealing with other groups within Richmond, including a group that deals directly with businesses. There are three distinct Richmond committees, but the one we have done the most work with is the Richmond Advisory Committee. They are fully supportive. They have representatives from the business community.

When we went through the public displays, there have always been several business owners who have concerns. The tourist operators themselves seem to be quite positive. The owner of the chemist, the service station and the supermarket - three businesses - feel as though it would potentially impact on passing trade. In other words, people who live at Colebrook or Campania and who would normally have to pass through Richmond may choose to use the link road and may not go in. However, we have specifically - and it will be signposted - made sure we never mentioned the word 'bypass' in all our consultation. It has always been the Richmond heavy vehicle link road and will be signposted in that way. That is one of the reasons we have done the junction design at the southern end, so if you are driving into Richmond you look up into Richmond, particularly tourists. However, we still can't predict a person who may stop at the supermarket, the chemist or the service station at the moment who lives at Campania or Colebrook. They have a local shop and a service station out there anyway and they probably use those, but we can't predict.

Mr BROOKS - Would the majority of businesses you have had contact with support this?

Mr ILES - I would say a large majority.

Mr BROOKS - Have you measured the traffic flow? Is it heavier going from south to north than the other way?

Mr ILES - Yes, but it is very difficult as it is seasonal, particularly with trucks. Traffic flow is seasonal in relation to tourist numbers as well. It is higher from October onwards over that period, so it is very seasonal. It is very difficult to predict.

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Mr BROOKS - Did you measure it at all?

Mr ILES - Initial counts were done earlier on.

Mr BROOKS - What did they indicate? I presume there would be more traffic going from Hobart or from the south into Richmond and then back out, rather than going from Hobart to Colebrook via that route?

Mr ILES - Yes. Again, traffic numbers drop off the further north you go up Mud Walls Rd. We can't predict what may happen in the future.

Mr BROOKS - I understand. The point of the question is whether you looked at that as part of your design and estimates. We are not going to hold you to the exact car number next year but I presume you would have a fair idea where most of the traffic goes and comes from and that has been taken into account in the design.

Mr ILES - Exactly.

CHAIR - On costings, set out on page 13, under 'additional items' it says 'for example, acquisition'. That suggests it is not all about acquisition, so what component of the project estimate will be acquisitions?

Mr ILES - I will have to check as I do not have the breakdown with me. We had the Valuer-General's department heavily involved in all our initial acquisition costs. We have also met all the landowners in relation to that. We have a contingency as part of acquisitions because there is also the compensation part. With these estimates there is always quite a high contingency. That is the whole idea of the P50 and P90 estimates. Hopefully, we would envisage bringing this under that price but we do not know until we get tender prices at this point.

CHAIR - The message from His Excellency suggests the project budget at \$6.62 million. Then the P50 estimate is about \$6.5 million. The P90 estimate pushes it way out, so what confidence do you have it is not going anywhere near the P90 estimate?

Mr ILES - With the construction industry the way it is, we would envisage getting some very competitive prices on this. The idea of the P50 is that you are 50 per cent confident, and there is a fair bit of contingency as well within that price. This has only come in within the last 12 months. We have been working towards these P50 and P90 estimates based on what the Australian Government requires for national projects. We are now doing it for all state projects. We are pretty confident that, with the current construction industry, we can bring it on this price.

CHAIR - We have had in the past a very detailed and valuable explanation of the P50 and the P90 estimates from Sarah Boyle. That has been of value to the committee in terms of getting that into context.

Mr BROOKS - Given the competitive prices or the ability to bring it in as sharp as possible with the competition around, will this go out as one whole contract or will it be separated into different aspects?

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Mr PAINE - One whole contract.

Mr BROOKS - There has been feedback to me over the last year or two that it would be beneficial to not only the parts but also to the community value that it could be broken into smaller parcels, therefore allowing better competition in the tendering. How many businesses can tender for a \$5 million-plus job in Tasmania?

Mr PAINE - You have to be pre-qualified

Mr BROOKS - How many are they?

Mr PAINE - I think it is close to 90 per cent for pre-qualified, probably even higher, who would be able to tackle a project between \$5 million and \$10 million.

Mr BOOTH - How many contractors are you expecting to put in a tender?

Mr PAINE - It is always hard to know. There are a few contractors that have traditionally worked up north but that are starting to tender more in the south because of the scarcity of work. We would expect four to six. It depends on the workloads and commitments at the time.

Mr BROOKS - So around 90 per cent of the approved DIER contactors have the ability to go over the \$5 million mark, or an approval up to a certain limit. How many would that be, roughly?

Mr PAINE - I do not know; I would have to have a look at the schedule.

Mr BROOKS - Would it be 10 or 20 or 200?

Mr PAINE - It would be more than 10. It might be as much as 20. That is a mix of road and bridge contractors.

Mr BOOTH - The contract you are talking about would only be \$3.5 million, because for the other you don't tender for your own fees and so forth?

Mr PAINE - That is right.

Mr BOOTH - Regarding professional fees - \$676 000. You have DIER internal overheads and fees, \$377 000; that is \$1 million worth of professional fees and administration. That percentage for design fees and administration seems vey high. Do you have a breakdown of what you get for those professional fees?

Mr PAINE - Traditionally, professional costs are between 10-15 per cent of the project, so they fit approximately within that.

Mr BOOTH - Is that just what they charge? Do you justify the work or do people say, 'It's a \$6 million job so I'll charge \$900 000'?

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Mr PAINE - No, they have to provide us with a fee proposal, which we review. They have to break it down in costs they are applying for - noise assessments, drainage calculations et cetera. We review them for being reasonable. Each project is different; some have more lighting and some would have street landscaping. We get fee proposals from the consultants and we review them.

Mr BOOTH - Do you benchmark them against what you could do in-house? Why does DIER need to use external consultants on a job like that? It doesn't seem a massively complex project; it's not a particularly long road or a big project in the scheme of things.

Mr ILES - DIER doesn't have any design expertise anymore; that was outsourced years ago. We are building that part up at the moment with smaller jobs. I work in planning and design and we're gradually building up our design section. We're also building up our planning sector in being able to do some of our environmental and heritage work, and also planning, which was all outsourced originally.

Mr BOOTH - Why was that?

Mr ILES - It was done by the governments of the day.

Mr BOOTH - A political decision?

Mr ILES - Yes. In the last 12-18 months DIER has been building up those resources where we can do a fair bit of work in-house. We won't go down the line of having a botanist or anything like that. That will still go out to consultancies, as will engineering design. We are always looking at what the costs are to undertake planning and design for our projects. We are always looking to reduce those costs.

Mr BOOTH - What sort of reduction in cost do you think you could achieve on those professional fees of \$676 000?

Mr ILES - I couldn't give you an estimate. The project is in the initial stages of planning. If it goes to a consultancy it is like, 'how long is a piece of string?'. By having our in-house resources, we at least then can do all the desktop assessments on heritage and environmental issues, so we know what the scope is. By knowing that scope you can save hundreds of thousands of dollars potentially, depending on the size of the job - tens of thousands of dollars on a small job. With planning applications, where we have to go through the local government planning approval process, we will do those in-house in the future. That can be anywhere between \$2 000-\$3 000 to \$30 000-\$40 000, depending on the scope of the project and how much is involved. There are potential cost savings in all those areas in future. We are building up those resources right now.

Mr BOOTH - Are you getting any kind of infrastructure as well - flashing-light signs, trailers with lights et cetera?

Mr PAINE - Yes, we have some variable-message signs.

Mr BOOTH - What does it cost you to hire them?

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Mr PAINE - I don't know. On a construction project such as this the contractor would be required to provide his own, but we do have some in our own fleet for smaller projects. We used them on the Tasman Bridge recently for the new speed sign lighting; they were all DIER-owned trailers.

Mr BOOTH - In looking at additional items - for example, acquisition - what are the other additional items at \$1.13 million?

Mr PAINE - I haven't seen the detail. It may include the access road, for example, that we have to provide for the property acquisition, or upgrades to other roads, so we would need to review exactly what is in there.

Mr BOOTH - That says e.g., not i.e., so are there things beyond acquisition in there?

Mr ILES - Some of it is in relation to services and some is related to upgrades of the road, like the reserve road we need to upgrade to provide additional access points.

Mr BOOTH - Could you explain that?

Mr ILES - There are four properties involved for access points. For Andrew Jones' property where we sever his title, we are providing a new access road of nearly 480 metres. It will come out on Colebrook Main Road just north of the football oval, currently the access to Houston's farm. It is actually owned by Andrew Jones but leased to Houston's.

Mr HALL - Will that 400-odd metres of road be included in that \$1.13 million?

Mr ILES - Yes, and fencing on both sides of that access road.

Mr BOOTH - And long-term maintenance?

Mr ILES - As part of Andrew's negotiation with the Valuer-General, for future compensation there is the long-term maintenance. That will be taken into account in his compensation. We are acquiring land off him, but as part of that we will fully fence the property in relation to the boundary with the link road. We will fully fence the new access road as well. We don't normally do that. We negotiated with him because of stock issues. It will potentially be a housing site for his daughter, so we have agreed to fence both sides of the new access road. Compensation includes his long-term maintenance of that access road.

Mr BOOTH - And the highway - will that road sever his property? You will fence both sides of that?

Mr ILES - Depending on what we do with the excess land. With our property acquisition, people often will then negotiate with adjoining landowners.

Mr BOOTH - So you are acquiring that whole [inaudible].

Mr ILES - Yes. First of all we acquire the corridor we need. Where we sever titles - DIER is not into managing land; we only want to acquire the land we need for a road - our asset area then negotiates, usually with adjoining property owners, to on-sell it.

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Mr BOOTH - If you put a road through a property and severed it then surely you would give the property owner the right to keep whatever pieces are left?

Mr ILES - Yes, exactly. It depends on the impact and how much is left on either side.

Mr BOOTH - Is the fencing responsibility then novated to the owner after you have done the initial fencing?

Mr ILES - That is correct.

Mr BOOTH - So it would be the same obligation as any other landowner in perpetuity?

Mr ILES - Yes.

Mr HALL - With those additional items under acquisition, you said you were going to provide a breakdown of those to the committee?

Mr PAINE - Yes.

Mr HALL - In terms of the agricultural land which will be acquired from Mr Jones, what is the approximate area?

Mr ILES - I will have to check. I can provide all the property acquisition plans.

Mr HALL - I was surprised that it says, 'the survey area has low agricultural potential and there is no conflict with the principles outlined in the PAL policy'. I take on board it is only a small area of land but I thought it is better than low agricultural potential, except it seems to have that wetter area through it.

Mr ILES - Most of that area floods in winter. We have designed how it impacts on Andrew's property on the original alignment, prior to our moving it slightly to the south or west when we came across the Aboriginal heritage issues, which impacted on Andrew's property slightly more. When we moved the alignment we sat down with him and worked out how his irrigation system works and where his drainage lines are. We designed it so it doesn't have any impact on his current irrigation and drainage issues.

Mr HALL - What classification was given to soil types?

Mr ILES - Fours and fives mainly through there, mainly because of the flooding issues.

Mr HALL - Given that advertising for tenders was targeted for February 2014, we have a relatively long time frame. Normally when we do these projects, tenders are going out one week later, and can often go out before the committee has given approval. Is there any reason for delay? Is that a budgetary constraint, or how wet it gets in winter? Is there any reason we are holding back at this stage until spring?

Mr PAINE - We didn't go to tender in February because we needed to conduct a final survey of the green and gold frog. There haven't been any green and gold frogs discovered in the area, so that's clear. We moved the program back a bit to accommodate those works.

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We would be looking to go to tender by the end of this month. When we go to tender and when construction starts, they can be two different things. We would like them to follow on but in this case, because we could possibly go to tender as early as the end of this month, there may be a delay before construction commences, because of the winter period. It may be too wet for us to start construction.

Mr HALL - If you had the opportunity and the tender was accepted, you may start earlier?

Mr PAINE - Correct, but I wouldn't think we'd be starting before July.

Mr BOOTH - On the green and gold frog, you indicated on site you had an initial precaution through putting culverts underneath the road, which would enable the moisture to get through. Was that by happenstance or do you have the culverts anyway, or was that a deliberate strategy to enhance the survival of the green and gold frog?

Mr ILES - It is a natural wetland area at the moment, which has been created from the agricultural pattern. It is low-lying and a natural wetland area and that is where the Aboriginal heritage issues come into it. Before we tried to work out an alignment we did the initial environmental surveys to acknowledge our constraints. Because of the wetland areas the green and gold frog was one of the things picked up initially as being there. We did a separate survey for the green and gold frog in 2010 and no frog was found. It is a potential habitat for the green and gold frog and green and gold frogs are in the area. This is how it all gets back to that tender date of February. Our environmental report was two years old. For most environmental reports, even though there is nothing in legislation - it is like a general protocol - after two years you should reinvestigate. We went back to DPIPW and did some consultation with them. They had done some of their own work in that time and the green and gold frog has been found within 500 metres of the site. That is why we did that extra survey to double check. It wasn't found but the culverts were always part of the project. We did a hydrological survey as well to work out the drainage lines so you don't increase the flooding behind; it goes back on Andrew Jones' property. There is also an issue with a stormwater drain down near the bottom, east of the existing turn-off to Middle Tea Tree Road, which has potential flood problems with the Clarence Council. We have been working with them in relation to our hydrological report so that you do not cause potential flooding

Mr BOOTH - The advice you provided on site about the culverts was a misunderstanding on my part that was part of the strategy to -

Mr ILES - It is for both drainage reasons and maintaining the wetland.

Mr BOOTH - If you look at the point of having to have assessment, it says nothing about what you are talking about there. That is a bit disappointing because if we are going to rely on this documentation to mean anything then it should be complete. You also say that approval under Tasmanian or federal EPBC for disturbance of the green and gold frog is not anticipated in this project. Is it required or not required?

Mr ILES - It is not required. Frogs move about, so it is a risk management. If the green and gold frog happens to move into the area during construction, a referral is required under commonwealth legislation.

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Mr BOOTH - So at this point there will be no referral if a green and gold frog turns up on site?

Mr ILES - Correct. Under Tasmanian legislation it is not, but under federal legislation it is.

Mr HALL - Back on construction cost again, pavement is \$784 000 and bitumen surfacing is \$263 000. Explain the difference.

Mr PAINE - Pavement is the sub-base, 500 to 600 millimetres built up underneath before you put the bitumen over it.

Mr BOOTH - This road will be constructed to potentially triple the axle loading?

Mr PAINE - Yes.

Mr BOOTH - Is it built to the heavier standard?

Mr ILES - It is not an HPV route and we would not envisage it being so. At the moment the HPV route is Tea Tree Road. They have the old log truck route, which is Midland Highway, Tea Tree Road and Fingerpost Rd. That was basically when Triabunna was open. It has always been DIER policy not to have Mud Walls Road as a major route from the Midland Highway.

Mr BOOTH - Is it mainly agricultural trucks but not forestry vehicles?

Mr ILES - Yes.

Mr BOOTH - Will you have B-doubles going on it or do they require a permit? Are they allowed to go on the rest of the route?

Mr ILES - Richmond Road is not a B-double route at this point in time and I do not envisage it being so.

Mr BOOTH - It is built to the standard that is necessary to make it contiguous right through?

Mr ILES - That is right.

CHAIR - Thanks, Adrian and Mark.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

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Ald DOUG CHIPMAN, MAYOR, Mr ANDREW PAUL, GENERAL MANAGER, CLARENCE CITY COUNCIL; Mr BARRY CHAPMAN, PRESIDENT, RICHMOND COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION; AND Mr ANDREW JONES, RICHMOND RESIDENT, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Harriss) - Welcome, gentlemen.

Mr CHIPMAN - Clarence Council is very supportive of this road being built. There has been concern for some time about the damage heavy vehicles have the potential to cause to the heritage parts of Richmond. We've also been concerned about the mix of traffic - the tourism traffic as well as the transport traffic - going through the fairly tight area in Richmond. It is a potential safety risk of well. There are also a lot of pedestrians walking through the village when the tourist season is at its height. It is going to be excellent to see all that deconflict take place. Unloading the risk to heritage buildings and improved safety are important to us. Now that Mud Walls Road has been improved markedly in recent times, the amount of traffic going through Richmond has increased considerably. If you now pick up the GPS navigator in your car, the preferred route that comes up mostly, particularly from the eastern shore, is up through Mud Walls Road to Launceston. There are all sorts of reasons but the road is top class now and attracting a lot more traffic.

Mr PAUL - In the late 1990s, but particularly in 2000, the council commissioned a study into the impact of heavy vehicle movements through the Richmond township, particularly in relation to aspects of heavy vehicle vibration and the impact it was having on heritage buildings. That study indicated to us that heavy vehicles travelling through the heart of the Richmond township were potentially having an impact on some of our major heritage buildings along the vehicle route and were in fact causing, or had the potential to cause, cracking in buildings. At that point council took the decision to support seeking a bypass around the Richmond township and actively pursued that by placing a reservation within our planning scheme to provide for transport movements around the town, to take heavy vehicle movements out of the centre of Richmond. Whilst I understand the proposed design is now slightly outside the reserved corridor, nonetheless the fact that council did reserve the corridor within its planning scheme back in the early 2000s is indicative that we are keen to the project proceed.

I reaffirm the mayor's comments on tourism amenity and long-term protection of some of the most important heritage buildings in the state. It is important that we take heavy vehicle movements out of the main street of Richmond. In support of particularly the traders and the tourism components of Richmond, it is important that if the project does proceed there is adequate planning for a significant gateway to Richmond and for adequate signage such that the township does not become bypassed but that there is a front door or front gate to the Richmond township, promoted through this project.

Mr CHAPMAN - Back in 1999 the Australian Heritage Commission joined with the Clarence City Council and did a complete cultural resource management study of Richmond. It issued its findings in June 2001. At that time there was very, very strong support from groups they invited from the community. Over 130 people went to these sessions; they had a professional facilitator running them and so on. That is relatively recently, within the last 13 or 14 years.

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I first moved to the area in 1982 and I bought a small rural property north of Richmond. I clearly remember that the standard road maps of the day had the line which the Clarence City Council had put in their planning scheme, as Andrew has just mentioned, in 2000. So there was already quite a lot of work done by the Richmond Council before it became part of Clarence - the old Richmond Council disappeared. From other research we found it was being discussed as early as the 1960s in the former Richmond Council. It has been a major issue for that area, particularly with the growth of tourism.

Supporting comments made by the engineering report, I note that on one of the most significant buildings they actually put recording meters. At the top storey it was recording three times the advised level of vibration, and that building does show signs of cracking. It has been made good but, of course it is not made good because of it has convict bricks. So there is evidence of vibration caused by heavy vehicles. Ironically, it is not the heavy-loaded vehicles that cause the major problem; it is the big vehicles that are relatively empty. They bounce much more and the vibration transmitted then amplifies as it climbs.

Mr JONES - My submission is based more on having to have that gravel access road. My great grandfather bought the place in 1895. My father was told in the early 1960s not to plant trees up our present farm driveway because the bypass that was coming in. It was going to come out opposite Kelly Field back in those days. Where it is placed at the moment, if you have to have a bypass, is probably the best option. I was a little bit disappointed when it was moved further out of that aforementioned corridor, but I have a couple of good friends, Scott Pigden and Justin Nichols, who own properties there and I could not find it in myself to try to get it moved back close. I thought it was quite a good compromise.

DIER have taken account an outlet from a dam that Houston's built on my property, a detention dam to stop heavy flow, so just a small flow. They have kept it to the east of that drain where it goes down through that drainage line, which, by the way, never held water until Pat Ryan put a small wall across in the mid-1980s, just behind the Richmond Maze. There was never any water in there unless there was a very big rain, because there is practically no fall there, so it did stay there. Pat Ryan dug it all out with a dozer in the 1980s. He is the father of Paul Ryan who presently owns that land.

I am losing quite a bit with the bypass - or link road because apparently some people do not want a bypass, but it is a bypass even though you give way at one end. Six years ago I leased land to Easton's. Previously I had a centre pivot there with four circles. It does leave the fourth set of wheels free to go around, but centre pivots have an overhang, so I am definitely losing quite a bit more, having that gravel access, which is accentuated by the Aboriginal heritage findings there. I have to have a bulge.

Because of our location close to Richmond, we have been jerked about a lot by authorities over the years. We always get done over in the end. I do not believe we will be compensated enough to maintain 480 metres of gravel road in perpetuity. I have a farm driveway about that length or a little bit shorter at the moment and it is a constant drain of manpower and finance to keep it in reasonable order.

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All the other land-holders affected by having access compromised by this road have alternative access to their titles up, what we used to believe, was our farm driveway, which is deemed to be the old road to Jerusalem, now Colebrook. We do not have a problem with that. They have alternative access. This 30-acre separate title does not have any other access. It is part of my farm succession plan, which most of you realise is quite a tricky thing to do. I will leave that 30 acres to my daughter. My son, who is already living in the old farm homestead, is going to take over the rest. I presently live down at Acton. So it is not setting a precedent by giving it direct access because everyone else has alternative access already. I think it is fairly extravagant to build a 480-metre gravel road when you can have perfectly safe access off a road which has the same speed limit as Acton Road. Now that I live down at Acton, I have not seen many accidents down there. I think it is a complete waste of money, and is taking up more of my agricultural land.

In correspondence so far from DIER, it seems they are expecting to just put a right-of-way over that land I lease to Houston's, which is owned by Limekiln Farms, of which I am sole owner. They just expected to put an easement on it, a gravel road, fence it and attach it to the title of A F Jones. If it has to go ahead they should have to buy that strip of land, fence it and attach it to that 30-acre title.

Mr BOOTH - They are both your companies?

Mr JONES - They are both mine but they are different entities. The 30-acre title is in my own name. My father left that to me about eight years ago when he passed away. The other one is the same entity that owns the rest of the farm. Because you are taking the access away, it should be attached to that 30-acre title.

Mr BOOTH - Presently it's just an easement across it, rather than an attachment?

Mr JONES - They are proposing an easement. In the letter I have they are taking an easement, but it's taking it out of production and taking it away because it's going to have a gravel road on it. It's more than an easement, in my view.

While I'm talking about compensation, the other strange thing is the house owned by Justin Nichols on a five-acre title to the east of the 30-acre title in question. My father built that when he retired in the early 1980s. He was put through the ringer by the Lands Department because it was deemed that Gordon Street ended two metres before his boundary fence. This was after the house was built and the Richmond Council had given approval. They deemed that it ended two metres before a boundary fence because they said the boundary fence was in the wrong place, not in his favour obviously, so it left a two-metre strip. My father had to put up with almost an easement because of that, yet when you look at the drawings now, Gordon Street goes straight through and DIER isn't going to compensate us for the piece of land it is presumed that Gordon Street goes across. I wonder what has changed. They seem to make the rules up as they go.

Mr BOOTH - It didn't go across it before but it does now?

Mr JONES - Yes. My father spent a lot of money on a lawyer, Steven Holt, trying to get a ruling that Gordon Street did in fact get to his five-acre title where he built his house, but to no avail. Now, all of a sudden, it does and they're not going to pay for it.

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I can live with a bypass; it is as good a placement as you could wish for but I am very much against having that burden placed on that block of land. It will considerably devalue it. No figures have been mentioned as to how much they will compensate us for it. The amount of money to invest to provide enough interest every year to maintain 480 metres of gravel road would be considerable, but no-one has mentioned a figure.

Mr BOOTH - And no figure for the actual land value?

Mr JONES - No, we haven't got that far yet. I find it very strange that this committee is sitting to determine whether it goes ahead, yet I have come under a lot of pressure to sign the acquisition papers. I have given them to my solicitor and told him to go slow. We've had this bypass threatened for many years and I am waiting to see if it goes ahead, although they have shifted the power poles.

CHAIR - Would you care to elaborate on your comment that you've been placed under a lot of pressure to sign the acquisition.

Mr JONES - Phone calls from the office of DIER, from Teresa Ferraro-Quin, asking why I have not signed. There was one little corner that will be divided where the road goes through that 30-acre block. It will leave a very small triangle on the eastern side, which will be no good to me so they may as well attach it to Justin Nichol's block. She wanted to know why I had not signed it. I said nothing was finalised yet. I said, 'If it goes ahead I will sign it but I am not signing it until everything is a bit more concrete'.

Mr PAUL - I made reference to the bypass corridor being picked up in the planning scheme when council prepared the previous planning scheme back in about 2000-01. It may be, as Barry indicated, that it was in the prior planning scheme. It certainly was at that point but it may have pre-existed that by many years. Certainly it was picked up. It is not just a recent addition. It has been acknowledged and sought after by council for a significant period.

CHAIR - Andrew, your preference clearly would be that rather than continue the road up to the Colebrook Road and access up there, it would be a reasonable proposition for you to access this link road, being the only access onto the link road.

Mr JONES - Yes. Where the present Victoria Street extends; that is its present access.

Mr BOOTH - But not used.

Mr JONES - I have a farm gate there and the farm gate has always been there. There used to be a rifle range there pre-war. In my grandfather's day he allowed a horse racing track to be there. I put a lock on the gate in 1972. When Simplot bring their pea harvesters, they always brought them in there because, although it is down a bit and covered in soil, there is rock underneath so it was an all-weather access to the farm. Our gateway on Middle Tea Tree Road goes off at quite a severe angle so it is very hard to get a large truck in from the Richmond end. So when we have big machines, they come in through that gate. Since Houston's leased it, I have an arrangement whereby I can come up through the gravel road they put in for access. Traditionally it was access for heavy machinery to the farm.

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CHAIR - You would acknowledge that a heavy vehicle link road will be compromised wherever there are accesses onto it? Is that a fair assessment?

Mr JONES - I would not think it would be compromised with one. There are lots of heavy vehicles going down Acton Road and there are gateways everywhere. I presume that building a pull-off area would be cheaper than to build and maintain 480 metres of gravel road. I am not an engineer; that is my opinion.

CHAIR - Does that 480-metre road compromise your pivot irrigator that you spoke about? Will you have to cut that back at all as a result of that road being there?

Mr JONES - With a pivot irrigator you can stop the end gun from going but you would have to get some more electronic equipment to put on the last extension. The particular pivot in question has only an 11-metre overhang past the last set of wheels, with about three drop tubes, so you would have to have a new panel - I am sure they are available - where you can cut those three tubes off because you would not want to be watering the road whenever it goes around - from a maintenance point of view. They can automatically turn off the end gun at any point you desire. I am quite sure my son will take the lease over but I can't guarantee that. The lease runs from next September for another 14 years. It is quite a long lease. All the anchor blocks have been GPS'd. The size and shape of Houston's lease, and the soil type, lend themselves more to four 43-acre pivot circles rather than two or three big ones, because you lose more in between with the bigger ones. Also, some of that soil is quite fragile in areas. With a bigger pivot you have larger water drops at the end because it travels faster than the centre. I was advised when I put a pivot there that it would be better to use a smaller one when you are growing things like vegetable seed, poppies and peas. Big ones are quite acceptable where you are watering grass where there is some protection - in a dairy situation.

Mr BOOTH - On the safety aspect of that road and if you had direct access onto the link road, the advice we have been given is that it is not standard practice to provide access onto those roads and that it would be dangerous to do so. Your daughter is going to build a house on that block?

Mr JONES - That is what she desires to do. She is only 26 at the moment.

Mr BOOTH - Obviously you have a strong personal interest in your land, but in terms of the safety aspect we have been advised that it is dangerous. DIER is suggesting that for safety reasons, not because they want to build a road.

Mr JONES - I understand that.

Mr BOOTH - Is that something that weighs on your mind?

Mr JONES - Not really. There are lots of higher speed roads that have a widened bit and people have access to and from them. Because it would be the only one and because of particular circumstances, I would prefer that and that is why I am here. I would have thought an 80 kph road could be widened out a bit in a similar fashion to what Acton Road is widened out for [inaudible] road down at Acton.

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Mr BOOTH - It does take a bit to stop a loaded semi.

Mr JONES - Yes, but it is a good sight line there because the access would be on the outside of a slight curve.

Mr BOOTH - But in crossing the road, whoever came out could go either way?

Mr JONES - Yes, point taken - if it were a 110-kph highway, but not 80.

Mr HALL - If this 480-metre gravel road is constructed, given that it is potentially for a house block, would you not agree that this road will only be carrying pretty light domestic traffic, therefore the recurrent maintenance cost would be fairly low?

Mr JONES - It would not be anywhere near that of a public road; it would be mainly light traffic.

Mr HALL - You were concerned about recurrent maintenance costs, but if it is only taking a few cars every day then it is going to be reasonably low, if it was well constructed in the first place.

Mr JONES - Yes, that is right. Part of the problem is that everything seems to be happening before I have been given the opportunity to see what the compensation may be.

Mr BOOTH - You have no idea at this stage what the offer is? It is just stated that you will get enough to be able to make a road.

Mr JONES - Yes. I am a little dubious of how much. I do not know what the budget for road is, but I did hear one of the Ryan boys, who works for Hazell, say that no way is it going to be built for what they have allowed.

CHAIR - For the whole project - \$6.6 million?

Mr JONES - Yes; that is what they said.

Mr BOOTH - It will be tendered out anyway. I cannot imagine they would be allowed to have an overrun like that.

Mr HALL - We have a link road with heavy traffic, and a combination of heavy traffic, large vehicles and tourist traffic, why wasn't a roundabout part of the mix at the entrance instead of the proposed junction? I would have thought that, for the medium and longer term, a roundabout would have been the best option.

Mr PAUL - I am not sure I am in a position to answer that. We have not been involved at any point in the design or construction. I suspect that is a question for DIER. My general comment in relation to roundabouts would be that they work pretty well where you have equal traffic flows, but where you have irregular traffic flows they do not work that well. In terms of why a roundabout was or was not considered, that is a question that would probably need to be directed to DIER rather than the council.

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Mr CHAPMAN - I think the original design had a roundabout, but remember I am only getting anything that is publicly released, but there were concerns about Aboriginal artefacts, and other concerns because Middle Tea Tree Road came in. Then there would be the road going into Richmond and then the link road. I understood that the design became rather complex so DIER came up with some alternative proposals which they put to the community. There have been three or four community consultations about different road designs.

Mr BOOTH - On that point, we were given advice that the design changed. Has the council a view at all? You said you were not consulted, but do you have a view with regard to the heritage aspect, the entrance and whether a roundabout would be suitable or unsuitable?

Mr PAUL - There has probably been work by some of our engineers but it has not been an issue elevated to council level. As a general issue we have not thought about whether a roundabout is better than a T or some other junction. What is important is adequate provision to maintain the landscaping and signage to create an entrance for the township of Richmond, because we certainly do not want the road to become a bypass. It is important that tourism and passing trade, if I can call it that, still have readily identifiable access into the Richmond township.

Mr BOOTH - Are you satisfied with the general concept of that type of intersection and the way it will work?

Mr CHIPMAN - I would like to underscore the point that Richmond is currently a destination in its own right, as well as a point to transit through. Any traffic approaching a decision point in regard to destination or transit should have a clear decision. I am not fussed whether it's a roundabout or a junction so long as we achieve that objective.

Mr BOOTH - The current design, as you've seen it, does achieve that?

Mr CHIPMAN - I haven't seen too much close design on this.

Mr BOOTH - So no comment on that?

Mr CHIPMAN - In relation to that, no. What Andrew said about landscaping, signage and an entrance to the village of Richmond is vital.

CHAIR - It is clear that traffic into Richmond will be uninterrupted and unimpeded and this will clearly be a side road. That is the evidence the committee has received from the department in terms of providing clean access into Richmond.

Mr BROOKS - I have a question about the Richmond Community Association. I understand there are three Richmond committees. Was there was business representation on your committee?

Mr CHAPMAN - Not really, but we have some people who are in business. The primary business group is the Coal River Valley Promotions Group. The former president of that organisation is now the chair of the Richmond Advisory Committee, which is the special

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subcommittee of council. He makes certain at all times that the business perspective is listened to, as it should be of course because tourism is so important to Richmond.

Mr BROOKS - What's that perspective on this project?

Mr CHAPMAN - There has been, for a number of years, a very small number, so far as we can ascertain, who were fearful of it. They thought all the traffic would drive by and they saw an early highway-type situation as occurred with Ross. Our group went up to Deloraine and spoke to the chamber at Deloraine and to business people at Ross. The response from Deloraine was fantastic. They said it was the best thing that's ever happened to the town. The people at Ross said, 'In the early days we didn't do it right but now we love it because people come in and we can give them this true historical village'. If you go to Evandale, which was naturally bypassed, they are able to present something quite different than Richmond can currently present. There's no doubt this could be the making of Richmond.

Mr PAUL - My advice from the Richmond Advisory Committee is that they are supportive of the project, although there are one or two voices within the business group who are concerned about it becoming a ghost town. Overall, the advisory committee is supportive of it. The advisory committee contains representatives from the many groups that exist within a small town like Richmond.

Mr BROOKS - I doorknocked the area last year and spoke to most business operators in the main street. There were a few who weren't overly impressed about it or were against it. The committee talked to DIER about that in our earlier discussion today. In your opinion, and from the feedback you've received, would you say the overwhelming majority of businesses would be supportive?

Mr PAUL - I don't know that our committee has polled or surveyed all businesses. I have asked the committee the specific question and they're telling me they support it, although they acknowledge there are a small number of dissenters within the business community, but overall the committee is supportive of it.

Mr BROOKS - I understand some of the fears that may be present but I also understand some of the opportunities that may come from it. One thing we need to make sure is that we understand the impact of decisions such as this. One way of getting that understanding is discussing it with groups and organisations. I was interested to see whether it was overwhelming one way or the other, or split down the middle.

Mr PAUL - My advice is that it would be in the minority.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, gentlemen.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

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Mr ADRIAN PAINE, SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER, TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE, ENERGY AND RESOURCES, WAS RECALLED AND EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Harriss) - Adrian, we have some matters related to the previous reference which we hadn't finished.

Mr BOOTH - Could you detail what we discussed earlier regarding the gentleman whose land is being acquired against two separate entities? He made the point that what you are effectively doing is sterilising the road strip that gives access to the 30-acre title. His point was you should acquire that land because it will be no use to him as a road. It is of no benefit to him to have a road going across that title, which is owned by a different entity, even though he is common to both titles. They are different corporate entities. If it is a separate ownership, why wouldn't you acquire it? Are you treating this in a different way because it appears it's the same person who is getting access to the 30-acre block across one of his other blocks, or if the block being accessed across was owned by some completely unrelated entity, would you do it in exactly the same way as you are doing it now?

Mr PAINE - The property services division within Transport Infrastructure Services looks after property acquisitions and coordinate the requirements for negotiation and settlement on those acquisitions with the Valuer-General's Office. The senior property service officer, John Tomlin, can talk through the process with you. The agreement and final discussions that would be settled with Mr Jones would be done through the Valuer-General's Office, so we couldn't give you an specifics about how that might be dealt with.

Mr BOOTH - When you're planning roadworks such as this, you don't just create a diagram on a land title where you want to put the proposed road across and then leave that to the Valuer-General. Don't you serve on the person a notice to treat or to acquire that land, or advise somebody to acquire the land? There must have been some step in the process before the Valuer-General gets to it. You must have made a decision that you're going to put this link road on that person's property, which would be a DIER decision and not the Valuer-General's, and the decision was made to create an easement or access right across the other title, not by the Valuer-General but by the road design team.

Mr PAINE - That is correct. My understanding is that this was done in discussion with Andrew Jones as to what we were proposing. I accept it is not his preferred outcome; he would like direct access onto the link road, but for safety reasons we were not going to agree to that. That is what we put on the table and it got to that point in discussions with Andrew in terms of how our acquisition of the title is dealt with, whether it is an easement and probably the level of compensation. Yes, we hand that over to the Valuer-General to settle. We do not get involved in those procedures.

Mr BOOTH - Would that also include the link road where it crosses the 30 acres? That is dealt with in exactly the same way?

Mr PAINE - Yes.