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PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

Illawarra Main Road

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

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Legislative Council

Mr *Harriss* (Chairman)
Mr *Hall*

House of Assembly

Mr *Best*
Mr *Green*
Mrs *Napier*

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INTRODUCTION

To His Excellency the Honourable Peter George Underwood, Officer of the Order of Australia, Governor in and over the State of Tasmania and its Dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY

The Committee has investigated the following proposal: -

Illawarra Road

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

The Submission of the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources was as follows:-

BACKGROUND

Illawarra Main Road runs from the Midland Highway at Perth to the Bass Highway south of Carrick. Illawarra Main Road essentially serves as a bypass of Launceston for traffic travelling between the northwest and south of Tasmania. This bypass function is particularly important for the movement of freight and primarily for this reason Illawarra Main Road is classified as a Category 1 - Trunk Road (the highest of five categories) in the *Tasmanian State Road Hierarchy*.

Two upgrade sites are proposed to improve the operation of Illawarra Main Road. Site 1 is located at the junction of Illawarra Main Road and Poatina Main Road (Tannery Road) and involves converting the current T-junction into a roundabout. Site 2 is located north of the Bishopsbourne Road junction with Illawarra Main Road and involves pavement strengthening, pavement widening, horizontal and vertical alignment improvements and the provision of a stock underpass.

The project is being undertaken in four main phases: concept development, preliminary design, detailed design and construction.

The concept development phase included the collation of ground, environmental and heritage information, geotechnical and pavement investigations and consultation with adjacent landowners. Possible options for the project were developed, costed and considered in this phase. At the completion of this phase a preferred option for each site was chosen for further development.

Site 2 was assessed against the Austroads guidelines for road design. This assessment identified that the width of the road is less than desirable for the volume and type of

traffic which now uses the road. Also, testing of the pavement revealed that sections of it have insufficient strength to carry the anticipated traffic load for the design life of 20 years. Furthermore, sight distance was found to be below Austroads guidelines at three crests one horizontal curve and a property access.

The second phase, preliminary design, has been completed and included the development of the preferred options. Further consultation with adjacent landowners, public utility owners and the Northern Midlands Council was completed in this phase.

The detailed design phase is now underway. Construction will not proceed until the project is approved.

Objectives

The overall objectives of the project are:

Site 1

- To improve safety for all users of the junction; and
- Provide better accessibility to Illawarra Main Road for residents of Longford and those further to the south.

Site 2

- Reinstate the structural integrity and ride quality of the pavement;
- Create a road geometry that is appropriate for the speed environment; and
- Provide one stock underpass at “Esk Farm” to eliminate two existing stock crossings to avoid potential conflict with road traffic.

Site Constraints

As Illawarra Main Road is a Category 1 road, the provision of an efficient transport route is important. The speed limit along the Illawarra Main Road is 100km/h, except in the vicinity of the Poatina Main Road junction, where the speed limit is 80km/h. The speed limit on Poatina Main Road is 60km/h.

Site 1

The site is constrained by sensitive flora and fauna sites to the north and a line of trees to the west.

Site 2

The site is constrained as it bisects the Esk Farm property with the farm house on one side and the cottage and equipment storage areas on the other, by historic trees and hawthorn hedges on each side of the road.

These features make it difficult to achieve the desired width, including provision of longitudinal drains.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Road

Site 1

The current junction of Illawarra and Poatina Main Roads is a T-junction that gives priority to Illawarra Main Road. There is a protected right turn lane from Illawarra Main Road into Poatina Road and left turn slip lanes on the other two approaches.

Site 2

Illawarra Main Road between Bishopsbourne Road and Wickford is a two-way two-lane road with a sealed pavement width that varies between the range of 6.5m to 7.2m with either no shoulder or a varying shoulder width up to 0.5m through its length. There are seven property accesses in Site 2. All of these are unsealed and the access at “Esk Cottage” has inadequate sight distance.

Traffic Flow

The most recent traffic counts indicate that the traffic flow on Illawarra Main Road west of Longford was around 3367 vehicles per day including 544 trucks in 2003 and 3595 vehicles per day including 622 trucks in 2008.

Road Crashes

Site 1 has been an accident black spot for many years. Since 2001 there have been 39 recorded crashes including 1 fatal and 3 listed as serious. Site 2 has had 4 recorded minor/property damage crashes since 2001.

The Road Side Environment

Site 1

The abutting land use is rural, predominately used for cattle raising. To the north is a floodway extending from the confluence of the Macquarie and South Esk Rivers. A levee bank has been constructed just south of the roundabout site to protect Longford. The road through this section is raised to reduce the possibility of flooding.

A line of trees is on the west side of Poatina Main Road.

Site 2

The abutting land use is rural, predominately used for cattle and sheep raising with some cropping. One 0.4 ha block is approximately half way along this section on the south side and contains a residential house.

The land is generally quite flat and forms part of the South Esk River floodplain at the southern end.

Hawthorn hedges line the road in the vicinity of “Esk Farm and Esk Cottage” and there are a number of other large trees within or adjacent to the road reserve. The hedges

restrict sight distance at the access to “Esk Cottage” and on the curve immediately to the east. Many of the trees are within the clear zone and are thus considered a hazard.

A number of power poles are close to the edge of the road.

There are several underground Telstra crossings which serve local properties.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

The justification for this project is derived from safety improvements, a reduction in the current high maintenance costs and the improvement to the operation of the road. These main issues are discussed below.

Safety Benefits

The proposed project incorporates significant safety improvements for road users:

Site 1

- Reduced speed through the junction;
- Clearer priority; and
- Better spaced decision points.

Site 2

- Elimination of conflict between road traffic and two stock crossing locations by providing a single shared stock underpass between two property owners;
- Increasing stopping sight distance to 100 km/h to match the speed limit and preferred operating speed;
- Improved alignment adjacent to “Esk Cottage” by eliminating an isolated lower speed curve;
- Increased safe intersection sight distance to an appropriate standard for users of road accesses ;
- Sealed accesses to provide improved skid resistance and reduce the amount of debris being dragged on to the main roadway;
- Improved delineation through the provision of edge lines and upgrading of guide posts; and
- The removal or protection of roadside hazards, reducing the severity of run-off-the-road crashes.

Maintenance Cost Savings

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

- Provision of extensive areas of new pavement;
- Using an overlay to improve ride quality and increase strength of the pavement for those sections of the road where the current pavement strength is deficient; and
- Construction of sealed shoulders to reduce road edge maintenance.

Road User Benefits

Site 1

- Reduced severity of crashes;
- Improved access to Illawarra Main Road and reduced waiting times for traffic entering from Longford.

Site 2

With increasing traffic on Illawarra Main Road (including increasing numbers of heavy vehicles) the proposed widening, vertical and horizontal curve improvements will have the following road user benefits:

- More uniform alignment of the road, reducing the need for speed changes and thus operating costs;
- Improved ride quality, which will reduce operating costs; and
- Eliminates possible conflict with crossing stock.

SITE DESCRIPTIONS

Site 1

The proposed works can be categorized as a junction improvement. In addition, there will be works for landscaping and to maintain access to the picnic area to the north of the site.

The existing T-junction is proposed to be replaced by a roundabout with a central island diameter of approximately 50 m. The size of the roundabout has been chosen as a compromise between operating speed, land acquisition and minimising impacts on sensitive flora and fauna sites.

Providing a roundabout will lead to lower speeds through the junction, and better spaced and well defined decision points with clear priority. The roundabout will reduce delays for north bound traffic on Poatina Main Road.

Much of the roundabout will require new full depth pavement. Existing pavement materials will be re-used where possible and resurfaced to have a uniform surface quality throughout.

Site 2

The proposed works can be categorised into:

- Pavement strengthening;
- Pavement width improvement;
- Vertical alignment improvement;
- Horizontal alignment improvement;
- Cross section improvement; and
- Access improvements.

In addition there will be works to improve drainage and landscaping.

Cross Section and Pavement

Widening the sealed pavement will provide vehicles with more room to manoeuvre. Currently there is no room for vehicles to pass other vehicles waiting to turn right into accesses and no room for vehicles turning left to pull to the side to turn into accesses.

The proposed cross section will provide an 8.0 metre sealed pavement (2x 3.5metre lanes) with 0.5 metre sealed shoulders and 0.5 metre verges.

Verges will be sprayed with bitumen to prevent verge erosion and widened to 1.0 metre where safety barrier is provided.

The pavement investigation indicated that some sections of the existing pavement have insufficient strength to carry the estimated traffic loads for the next 20 years. Consequently a 175mm granular pavement overlay has been incorporated into the design.

Where full vertical and horizontal alignment works are being carried out a new full depth pavement will be provided.

Horizontal and Vertical Alignment

Near “Esk Cottage” it is proposed that the vertical and horizontal alignment be changed to increase the sight distance when travelling along the road, and from accesses, and to bring the horizontal and vertical alignments up to the desired 100 km/h standard, which will match the speed limit. Stopping sight distance is limited on the eastern side of the access by the vertical alignment of the road.

Accesses

The access into “Esk Cottage” has Safe Intersection Sight Distance well below that desired for a road speed of 100 km/h in the eastern direction. This is largely due to a line of historic hawthorn hedges. The owner of “Esk Cottage” has expressed a strong desire to keep the hedges, and as they are of high cultural and landscape value and provide a visual barrier between the road and his equipment storage areas at the rear of “Esk Cottage”. It is proposed to retain as much of the hedge as possible.

DIER and the owner of “Esk Cottage” will review the sight distance available after the roadworks are completed and determine the extent of hawthorn hedge removal to provide improved sight distance.

All existing accesses will be made safer than they are currently through provision of a wider shoulder and sealing of the accesses.

Drainage

The existing road drainage system generally operates satisfactorily, however there are areas where the road is at (or close to) the surrounding ground level in flat country which is difficult to drain.

Drainage will be improved by the provision of table drains where practical. However, the extent that they can be provided will be restricted by the culturally significant trees and hedges along the road.

Existing culverts will be lengthened (as required) to accommodate the wider road. Pavement drainage will be improved by providing subsoil drainage where practical and by an improved pavement shape allowing the water to run off the sealed surface.

Stock Underpass

The owner of “Esk Farm” has a need for stock to cross over Illawarra Main Road approximately twice a week. There has been increasing difficulties with traffic, particularly heavy vehicles, refusing to slow down or stop when stock are on the road, despite being warned by people involved in the stock crossing process.

A stock underpass is proposed to eliminate this safety hazard. Following discussions with the landowners of “Esk Farm” and their southern neighbour, the underpass is to be a shared facility and will be located close to the boundaries between the two properties.

The underpass will be drained by an underground stormwater drain that will outlet between the stock underpass and the South Esk River to the north.

EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

Flora

Site 1

A flora and fauna study has been conducted in the vicinity of the roundabout. This study identified two species listed under the Threatened Species Protection Act 1995: *Persicaria decipiens* (slender knotweed) and *Asperula subsimplex* (water woodruff) of floral conservation significance. A previous study had noted the presence of *Ranunculus pumilio* (ferny buttercup) but this was not recorded in this study.

Specimens of *Persicaria decipiens* were lifted and relocated into the newly constructed floodway preceding construction of a road junction upgrade in 1998. These plants were not moved more than 50m from their place of origin.

The study concluded that significant biological values are all confined to the floodway and the Coastal Grass and Herb field (GHC) community. They should not be directly impacted by the roundabout construction.

Some of the road reserves on which the junction will be constructed have been included within the South Esk River Wildlife Sanctuary & Conservation Area. Roadworks will require a Reserves Activity Assessment for approval.

Site 2

A flora and fauna study was conducted along this section of Illawarra Main Road. This study concluded that, due to the highly modified nature of the environment as a result of roadworks and agricultural activities, there are no floral items of conservation significance likely to be affected by the works.

Fauna

Site 1

The fauna and flora study identified the area of the roundabout as having potential habitat for the green and gold frog. A review by the Conservation Assessment Section of Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) concluded that the roundabout poses no threat to the green and gold frog, providing steps are taken to prevent the possible spread of disease. This can be addressed by appropriate hygiene requirements within the construction specification.

Site 2

A flora and fauna study has been conducted along this section of Illawarra Main Road. No fauna of conservation significance were noted.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

There are no listed Aboriginal Heritage sites within the areas of both Sites.

Historic Heritage

Historic heritage studies were conducted at both Sites.

Site 1

In the vicinity of the roundabout the following sites are Heritage listed:

- Register of the National Estate:
 - Longford Historic Town;
 - Country Club Hotel; and
 - Longford Railway Station.
- Tasmanian Heritage Register:
 - “Kingsley”;
 - Country Club Hotel; and
 - Longford Picnic Grounds adjacent to Old Mill Dam.
- Northern Midlands Planning Scheme:
 - “Esk Farm”;
 - “Kingsley”, and
 - Country Club Hotel.

A key cultural landscape attribute are the elm trees planted on the west side of the Poatina Main Road in Longford that extend to the existing junction. They are also associated with the elm trees planted on both sides of Tannery Road for a short distance. Although the integrity of the avenue has been disrupted in places (by the access to the Abattoir, the flood levee and Illawarra Main Road) it is an important feature that provides, by way of a

clear visual link, an insight to the earlier road system and Tannery Straight (also an important part of the former motor racing course).

There are also scattered cultural landscape elements, which include hawthorn lined grant and paddock boundaries, and zones of archaeological sensitivity that are potentially indicative of earlier land use and/or occupation.

The only item with potential direct involvement with the roundabout is the line of elms on the west side of Poatina Main Road. The roundabout has been positioned to have no impact on these trees or any zones of archaeological sensitivity.

Site 2

In the vicinity of the proposed works the following sites are heritage listed:

- Register of the National Estate:
 - “Esk Farm”;
 - “Wickford”; and
 - Longford Historic Town.
- Tasmanian Heritage Register:
 - “Esk Farm”; and
 - “Wickford”.
- Northern Midlands Planning Scheme:
 - “Esk Farm”; and
 - “Wickford”.

The study area traverses a distinctive historic cultural landscape. Within that landscape the tree lined approaches to, and the frontage of, “Esk Farm” (in particular) and “Esk Farm Cottage” are of landmark quality. These elements also contribute to the setting of the Illawarra Main Road and to the built heritage comprising both places.

The majority of the planted species are European in character (species include elm, hawthorn, oak, Monterey cypress, Monterey pine, ornamental conifer species). Eucalypts have also been planted and are a landmark element associated with “Esk Farm”.

A zone of potential archaeological sensitivity was identified in a paddock on the eastern side of Illawarra Main Road, near the property/road reserve boundary north of the northern most entrance to “Esk Farm”. A scatter of hand made clay brick fragments, ceramic and dark olive green bottle glass is typical of a mid (possibly early) 19th century occupation site. The site environment has been partly disturbed by excavation of drains and general farm traffic.

In general, the landscape character is highest in the northern two-thirds of the study area (i.e. on the approach to “Esk Farm” and “Esk Farm Cottage”). There are also scattered trees and plantings in the southernmost one third that are contributory elements and/or of local importance.

An earlier road alignment is discernible on the north-east side of the Bishopsbourne Road/Illawarra Main Road junction (east).

The proposed works have been designed to minimise the impact on the hawthorn hedges and other planted species, within the constraints of road safety standards.

Visual Impact

Site 1

These works should have minimal visual impact on surrounding areas. There are no houses within the immediate vicinity. The level of the road will remain relatively unchanged. No trees need to be removed to undertake the works.

Site 2

There will be some impact on visual amenity as it will be necessary to remove some trees to facilitate the road re-alignment and the stock underpass. However, the design has kept the number of trees required to be removed to an absolute minimum and the impact is considered to be minor.

Noise

Although it is not directly stated in the DIER Code of Practice Minimisation of Road Traffic Noise in Design and Construction, it is generally understood that no noise studies are required when the Works do not significantly alter the road from the existing situation.

Site 1

The intersection changes will result in negligible change to noise levels at the nearest properties, with the closest commercial property over 200 metres away and the nearest house more than 300 metres from the junction.

Site 2

The proposed works will cause negligible change to the noise levels at the adjacent houses. The improved riding surface may lead to marginally increased noise levels.

ENVIRONMENTAL SAFEGUARDS

Proposed Management Regime

In order to limit the impact on the environmental values identified, the following processes and actions are being incorporated into the project:

- The area of land being acquired for completion of the works has been kept to the minimum practicable level required by good road design.
- All weed areas are being clearly identified and requirements for the treatment of the various declared weeds included in the tender documents, so they can be eradicated during construction.
- Measures for protection of the green and gold frog are being included in the tender documents for Site 1.

- All sites with environmental values will have environmental protection fencing erected around them for the duration of the construction.
- In the unlikely event that any Aboriginal cultural material is encountered during the construction phase the normal protocols will be followed. These require that all activities cease in the area immediately, pending consultation with the TALSC and the Manager, Aboriginal Heritage Section of DPIPW.

Environmental Approvals Required

Site 1

Some of the land parcels reserved for the roads on Site 1 are within the South Esk River Wildlife Sanctuary & Conservation Area. A Reserves Activity Assessment has been sought for the road works. No other environmental approvals are required for this site.

Site 2

A works permit is being sought from Heritage Tasmania for the works that impact on the listed Heritage Precinct area of “Esk Farm”, including any tree removal in this area.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Potential social and economic impacts as a result of the proposed works will be positive, as the aim is to widen the road and improve safety along Illawarra Main Road and its associated accesses.

There will be some short-term social impacts arising from inconvenience associated with the road construction activities. These will be mitigated by good communication and traffic control during construction.

Property Impacts

Site 1

All the land surrounding the junction is owned by a single owner. Works are expected to be contained within the existing road reserve, no land acquisition is anticipated.

Site 2

There are four landowners who own land adjacent to the road. It will be necessary to acquire “user road” and land from the “Esk Farm” property. The acquisition from “Esk Farm” will be from the frontage of the property and will require re-fencing.

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

Cyclists

Cyclists who use Illawarra Main Road currently must occupy part of the traffic lane. Austroads recommends that in a 100km/h zone the bicycle lane width be 3.0m

(maximum), 2.5m (desirable). Due to limited road reserve width, providing these widths is not feasible.

Public Consultation

As part of the project, a stakeholder action schedule was developed which included public consultation. DIER has consulted with key stakeholders including:

- Northern Midlands Council, who are supportive of the upgrading works and are keen to landscape the roundabout and batter slopes as an entry feature to their town.
- Two landowners affected by the proposed new single stock underpass. Agreement has been reached and finalisation of details is required.
- Transportation Association bodies who have expressed concern about the roundabout especially in fog situations. DIER will make provision for a future installation of a fog warning system, if required, after operation of the roundabout.
- Owner of No 723 Illawarra Road providing advice on the project due to the proximity of the house to the road.
- Government agencies on the approval processes and requirements.
- Public utilities on service relocations.

A public display of the project sites 1 and 2 was advertised in the Examiner on the 19 September 2009 and was conducted at the Northern Midlands Council offices from the 21 September 2009 to the 9 October 2009. The public display resulted in no comments on either of the projects. A meeting with Northern Midlands councillor representatives and staff was held on the 25th September 2009 to review the current preliminary plans for the two sites.

DIER has programmed to consult with the following groups to advise of the start of construction:

- Transportation Association bodies;
- Bus operators;
- Emergency services;
- Public utility providers;
- Community through a public notice.

APPROVALS

Planning Approval

The project areas are entirely within the bounds of Northern Midlands Council. Use and development within this municipality is governed by the Northern Midlands Planning Scheme 1995 (updated 2007).

According to the planning scheme, Site 1 road works are defined as “Other Roadworks”. The road works will occur in the road reserve, which is declared as falling within the

Road Zone. “Other Roadworks” are permitted in the Road Zone but require a permit (section 13.2.3), so a Development Application has to be submitted.

The planning scheme defines the Site 2 works as “Minor Roadworks”. Most of the roadworks occur on the ‘footprint’ of the existing road, located within the Road Zone. “Minor Roadworks” are a permitted use or development within the Road Zone, but require a planning permit. A development application has to be submitted.

Any part of the Site 2 works that fall outside the road reserve will enter the “Rural General Zone”. All types of road works defined by the scheme, including “Minor Roadworks”, are prohibited in this zone. Prior to construction, DIER must acquire any land required and incorporate it into the road reserve.

The Sites are potentially affected by a number of General Provisions within the Planning Scheme including Watercourse Protection (section 14.6), Flood Prone Areas (Section 14.5) and Vegetation and Tree Removal (Section 14.7). Heritage considerations are particularly important for Site 2 and protection is provided by the planning scheme in Part 18.

As at the preliminary design phase the Sites do not fall within any of the Special Areas outlined in Part 15 of the scheme.

All of Longford falls within the Flood Hazard Special Area (15.9), due to its location at the junction of the South Esk and Macquarie Rivers. This special area does not change the permitted status of the development; however, it requires that design consider the effects of flooding and the effect of the development on water flows and flood levels.

The Development Application for the Site 1 - Roundabout has been approved by the Northern Midlands Council.

The Development Application for Site 2 - Bishopsbourne to Wickford, is currently programmed to be lodged in November 2009.

State Policies

State Coastal Policy

The Tasmanian State Coastal Policy 1996 is applicable to all land within a distance of one kilometre from the high-water mark. It does not apply to this project.

State Policy on the Protection of Agricultural Land

The State Policy on the Protection of Agricultural Land 2000 provides for protection of the State’s prime agricultural land from conversion to non-agricultural use and development. The policy defines Prime Agricultural Land as meaning:

Agricultural land classified or capable of being classified as Class 1, 2 or 3 land using the Class Definitions and methodology from the Land Capability Handbook, KE Noble 1992, Department of Primary Industry, Tasmania.

There is no prime agricultural land within the project area. Site 1 does not impact agricultural land. Site 2 has very minor impact on Class 4 agricultural land.

State Policy on Water Quality Management

In accordance with Section 35.1 of The State Policy on Water Quality Management 1997, all road construction works must employ measures consistent with best practice environmental management to prevent erosion and the pollution of streams and waterways by runoff from sites of road construction.

Appropriate silt control and sedimentation measures will be put in place to protect the surrounding waterways and prevent potential soil erosion on site.

Federal Approvals

The project is jointly funded by the Australian and Tasmanian Governments, with each contributing \$3.1 million. It has been approved under the Nation Building Program as an off network project and the Project Approval Instrument number is TPT3141.

In addition to Sites 1 and 2 identified in this document, the joint funding considers two other projects at Sites 3 and 4; however it is not expected that there will be sufficient funding to complete more than Site 1 and 2.

Site 3 - Improvements at the Midland Highway Junction

This involves re-alignment of Clarence Street at its intersection with the Midland Highway and truncating Old Punt Road at the Midland Highway. These works would improve the safety at this intersection by removing one access point at Old Punt Road, providing a square intersection angle with Clarence Street and increasing sight distance. The estimated cost at this site is \$0.85M.

Site 4 - Extension of the Illawarra Road left turn slip lane onto the Bass Highway, pavement widening and shoulder sealing extending south of the Bass Highway

The works would also provide a more consistent cross section width as it would match adjacent sections. The aim is to improve safety for all road users by improving visibility to the departure lane for traffic travelling west, to reduce delays for through traffic heading west and to reduce potential conflict between left turning and through vehicles. The estimated cost at this site is \$0.88M.

CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM AND COSTS

Project construction is programmed for the summer of 2009/10. This allows works to be constructed with a lower risk of inclement weather, which would delay construction and increase costs, causing extended disruption to the travelling public. The key dates are shown in Table 1 and Table 2. The major project components and estimated costs are shown in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 1.
Program – Site 1

Project Phase	End Date	Start Date
Design development	Nov '09	Jan '09
Tendering and tender assessment	16 Dec '09	21 Nov '09
Construction	Jun '10	Feb '10

Table 2.
Program – Site 2

Project Phase	End Date	Start Date
Design development	Mar '09	Jan '10
Tendering and tender assessment	Feb '10	Mar '10
Construction	Aug '10	Apr '11

Table 3. Cost Estimate – Site 1

Cost Item	Amount (\$)
Earthworks	374,000
Drainage	85,800
Pavement	369,100
Bituminous Surfacing	200,200
Traffic Facilities	278,400
Landscaping	35,000
Accesses and Utility Relocation	239,100
Design, Contract Administration, Project Management and Public Consultation	763,100
Contingency ¹ ($\approx 20\%$)	459,000
Out Turn ² (0%)	(Included)
TOTAL	2,676,000

Table 4. Cost Estimate – Site 1

Cost Item	Amount (\$)
Earthworks	178,400
Drainage	198,400
Pavement	436,300
Bituminous Surfacing	473,000
Traffic Facilities	121,900
Landscaping	80,000
Accesses and Utility Relocation	579,000
Acquisition	16,000
Design, Contract Administration, Project Management and Public Consultation	929,700
Contingency ¹ ($\approx 20\%$)	587,000
Out Turn ² (0%)	(Included)
TOTAL	3,445,000

¹ Contingency relates to the level of risk attributed to an activity. Any savings from the project is generally translated as additional works to the project scope.

² Out Turn is the expected increase in rates between the time of compiling the estimate and construction.

EVIDENCE

The Committee commenced its inquiry on Friday, 30 October last with an inspection of the site of the proposed works. The Committee then returned to Henty House, 1 Civic Square, Launceston whereupon the following witnesses appeared, made the Statutory Declaration and were examined by the Committee in public:-

- Steven Kaczmariski, Senior Project Manager, Department of Infrastructure, Energy & Resources
- Shane Gregory, Manager, Planning and Design, Department of Infrastructure, Energy & Resources
- Juan Lee, Consultant, Pitt & Sherry
- Michael Edrich, Consultant, Pitt & Sherry
- Hugh Mackinnon, Resident of Longford

Background

Mr Kaczmariski provided the following background for the project:-

The Illawarra Main Road project comprises four sites along the Illawarra Main Road. Site 1 is the Poatina-Tannery Road junction; site 2 is the section from Bishopsbourne Road to Wickford; site 3 is the Midland Highway end; and site 4 is the Bass Highway end. We have identified these four sites in this parliamentary report with a particular emphasis on sites 1 and 2 because we feel that it is unlikely there will be sufficient funding to meet all four of these projects.

Site 1, in context, is called the Poatina Road roundabout. The roundabout has been proposed for many years. The junction is a high-accident location and even after further work and speed camera installation, the accidents have continued to occur. We are proposing a 50 metre diameter roundabout that is similar to the Bell Bay roundabout and this will achieve reduced speeds and safer operation with well-spaced position points and clear priority.

Site 2 is from Bishopsbourne to Wickford. The project involves pavement strengthening as well as vertical and horizontal alignment improvements. It is proposed to put in a single stock underpass to be shared by two adjacent property owners. With the pavement strengthening, the structural overlay that we are proposing will reduce maintenance costs and improve and reinstate a good ride quality on that section of road. We are proposing sealed shoulders of half a metre as this is all that we can achieve within the constraints of the boundaries and the other environmental and heritage issues along this section of road. We are proposing to realign the road margin at about change 2 010 which is about halfway along the project.

Site 3 is the realignment of Clarence Street to square up its junction at the Midland Highway and to close off Old Hunt Road at the Midland Highway. I just pass

around a plan, if I may, that shows the work that we discussed today but didn't get a chance to fully evaluate. The plan that I have provided you with is in effect the concept plan that we have and there's not too much work that has been done in addition to that apart from a broad costing... About \$900 000... So at the moment that's a strategic estimate and one of the issues that we've identified is that there is a potential for contamination from the two service stations on the other side of the road so we expect that there'd be a reasonable amount of investigation required so it's got a fairly high contingency on that basis.

Site 4, then, is the Illawarra Main Road left-turn slip lane onto the Bass Highway. The open proposal there is to improve visibility of the departure lane as you are approaching the Bass Highway intersection.

The Illawarra Main Road is an effective bypass of Launceston for freight and traffic travelling from the north-west coast to Hobart. So, on that basis, the road is a category 1 trunk road classification under DIER's State road hierarchy, which is the highest of our five categories. On that basis the State Government, through an election commitment in 2006, have provided \$3.1 million worth of funding, and similarly the Federal Government has pledged in the 2007 election \$3.1 million to fund this project dollar-for-dollar. The site 1 estimated cost is \$2.7 million in round terms, so that is the roundabout. The Bishopsbourne section is estimated at \$3.5 million. Site 3, the Midland Highway end, is \$0.9 million, and site 4 on the Bass Highway end is a similar \$0.9 million estimate.

Mr Gregory added the following:-

The development of the project to get us to the point where we have the projects that we do is underpinned by two key documents, the Illawarra Main Road Planning Study from 2000, which was conducted up to 2000 and published in 2000, and another document, the Perth Roads Priorities for Improvement, which was produced in 2008. The first document, the Illawarra Main Road Study, was a strategic level approach to the Illawarra Main Road, and it looked at Illawarra Main Road in terms of transport efficiency, safety for motorists, environmental constraints, heritage constraints, and that process included some consultation with the community and identified 10 key projects to be undertaken. Since that time a number of those projects are no longer relevant. For example, project 2, the dairy stock underpass, is no longer a project of relevance, and some of the priorities have changed slightly.

The highest priority project identified was work at the Longford junction, and at that time it was simply to be an improvement of the delineation of traffic west bound to eliminate a series of crashes involving right-turn vehicles, so that was a fairly low-cost project and there was some work undertaken. Subsequently in 2008 a broader view was taken that incorporated the Illawarra Main Road, Midland Highway, Youl Main Road, Drummond Street and the intersection at project site 3. That work focused specifically on safety as distinct from the Illawarra Main Road

which was a bit higher level and looked at transport efficiency as well. So the key outcomes from the Perth Road study were that the Longford junction issue still remained, and a greater level of work needed to be undertaken to eliminate the right-turn crash problem, and that led to the development of a roundabout proposal. A roundabout was considered under the original Illawarra Main Road study but priority was given to a lower-cost option and also because the community generally did not support an option that they saw as imposing on those members of the community who were driving safely. So a lower-impact option was initially undertaken, but subsequent analysis showed that that had not been effective, so that led us to the roundabout option.

They are the key elements. The priorities that were put forward in the strategic study were done on the basis that there would be some more work undertaken to refine those priorities, so some of the priorities have been moved around and, in looking at the work, the strict order of priority as identified through the study would not be adhered to because you would look to link specific sites together to make actual projects. So in that case one of the key things to be undertaken was to make some improvements around Esk Farm, the sight distance, and the underpass was included in that. That section of road has effectively been the missing link, if you like, in the cross-section, so that was the section of road that was inconsistent with regard to the rest of the road in terms of cross-section, so that had been slightly elevated in priority. The Mountford stock underpass which had been given a high priority initially, a priority 4, after some consultation with the community and the identification of an alternative option was relegated to a priority 7 in the final document... There is an existing alternative for stock to be taken down to an existing bridge and underpass the road and existing bridge. So for a small amount of work, a viable alternative could be found that would be lower costing.

With regard to environmental and heritage issues, Mr Edrich provided the Committee with the following background:-

Both sites are heavily constrained for the design, so I will start with site 1, the roundabout. You may have noticed on site that there are lines of trees down that way and there are many heritage issues around there. The design of the roundabout has managed to avoid impacts to the heritage values of Longford there. To the north of the roundabout you have the South Esk Wildlife Conservation Area, and that area goes within some of the road reserves there, so that has required a reserves activity assessment which we have submitted... There are many constraints around there, but the design of the roundabout managed to avoid them.

Then to site 2, the Bishopsbourne to Wickford section, there were not natural value constraints there. It was all heritage and cultural landscape issues, mainly to do with historic tree plantings alongside the road, and you would have noticed that with the elms. And of course Esk Farm is listed on the Tasmanian Heritage Register, protected by the Historic Cultural Heritage Act. We have applied for an exclusion to heritage approval for Esk Farm and have just received exclusion from

heritage works approval because Heritage Tasmania's interest is completely with the Esk Farm as opposed to the Esk Cottage on the southern side of the road... The information that Heritage Tasmania supplied, the map of the area was a sketch map so it was difficult to define the boundaries, and that resulted in our applying for heritage exclusion so that Heritage Tasmania could assess the works and determine whether or not we were impacting. It did not look like we were going to, and that has been confirmed... The main heritage impacts are more cultural, landscape impacts, the trees that are being removed. You will have noticed the eucalypt trees in the paddock and the one pine tree that are being removed; they have been deemed to be not that significant due to the remaining paddock staying intact, and the same with the line of trees. There have been four elms to be removed out of a line of 18.

With regard to public and stakeholder consultation, Mr Kaczmariski provided the following background:-

The main engagement with the stakeholders has been with the owner of Esk Farm, because the majority of work on the Bishopsbourne section goes through his particular property, so I've had lots of discussions, I should say, at least three discussions with him specifically about what might need to be removed, what can be retained and we had a discussion about the elm trees and we identified that they have significance to him as well. At the moment I've said that we have to take two out and we might have to take a third one out and that's a further point I just need to clarify with that particular owner. He's comfortable about the big eucalypt and the old pine tree that we looked at on the other side of the road and then there are the ongoing issues with the hawthorn hedging that we've said that we'll come to an arrangement and see when we get through to the construction phase how that might transpire.

That's been the main engagement that I've had and then DIER develops a stakeholder arrangement plan for all our projects which identifies who the key people are that we need to talk to.

The other landowner that's involved with the stock crossing, that's the owner of Killam Farm; we have also had discussions with and probably need some more consultation shortly. We've not met with him for some time, a couple of months at this stage. We've discussed the issues with the Northern Midlands Council, and particularly the landscaping of the roundabout, for example. They're keen to make that an entry feature into Longford so we've said that we'll assist them wherever we can but if they're wanting something that's too out of the ordinary, then they might need to take over some responsibility for maintenance for that entry into their town. So they're coming back to me with those sorts of issues...

Regarding the two owners that have the stock underpass, the transport association and the transport council, I have met with both of those organisations, talked to their CEOs about the project, particularly the roundabout. We've had a response

from both of those organisations and DIER has advised them that we have to go and talk to them in their committee meetings or in their council meetings so we can put forward the DIER situation and issues on why we are doing what we're doing. At this stage, we're waiting on their response to come back to us so we can go and have that further conversation with them...

The truck owners' responses will be targeting to come back through the transport council and the transport association. Obviously, I'd have to say that the truck drivers don't like roundabouts because they do have to slow down. In this particular case the issue is safety; the junction particularly at the roundabout obviously is a high-accident location and, therefore, we need to do something about that...

We have also conducted a public display of sites 1 and 2 at the Northern Midlands Council in September, finishing in early October. We received no public comments or submissions on that public display. As I said, we have met with Northern Midlands Council to look at particularly the roundabout project itself, but the discussion mainly revolved around the landscaping rather than the actual roundabout itself. The development application to the Northern Midlands Council has been approved for the roundabout, and so we are now working on the basis of getting tenders out in November and in hopefully awarding the project as soon as we get your approval.

Just to summarise then, with site 1 which is the roundabout, the main intention of that project is to improve safety, and as a result of that there will be better accessibility to Illawarra Main Road from the Longford side, which I think you mentioned before about Burnie traffic having to slow down, so that will be an outcome there. At site 2 we are looking at reinstating the structural integrity of the road, which will improve the right quality and also improve the road geometry for the 100 km/h speed environment which that road is. That road standard that we construct to will be consistent with the adjacent section of the Illawarra Main Road, so the feeling when you get onto that road at the Perth end and leave at the Bass Highway end will be similar all the way through, and obviously we will be providing the one stock underpass to eliminate the two existing stock crossings...

We still have to finalise the details. We have had what you would call preliminary discussions and preliminary agreements and verbal agreements. We need to finalise those arrangements with those landowners, but bearing in mind the construction program we have at the moment is to build the roundabout this summer, and then tender out and construct the Bishopsbourne section in the following construction period, which probably would start in about August, so it could be started earlier, and that is based on the funding as well, that we have approximately half the funding this year and half next year.

Mountford Underpass and Slope Improvement

The Committee questioned the witnesses with regard to any proposed plans to improve the slope and underpass at Mountford. Mr Gregory responded:-

It's not on the capital works program at this stage. In terms of looking at the priorities, reviewing these priorities, it was thought that the need to get some consistency in the cross-section would raise the section that we're doing ahead of the Mountford section. This particular area through Mountford does have quite a good cross-section at the moment so, yes, there is a slight deficiency in sight distance that we would like to improve, however we do have more manoeuvring space so if you are faced with a situation you actually have more pavement to manoeuvre on to avoid that. The other issue with Bishopsbourne to Wickford is that since the 2000 report, there's been a significant ageing of the asset so we have moved eight years down the track when we were typically designing pavements for 20 years with a view that they'll last to maybe 30. So the residual life in that pavement is dramatically lower whereas the rest of the road is still in reasonable condition. So the urgency to upgrade Bishopsbourne to Wickford has elevated. If we went back and did this again, I think that would have a greater priority than the Mountford section.

The Committee questioned the witnesses with regard to heavy vehicles slowing for the stock crossing. Mr Kaczmarek responded:-

At the moment the reason that we are doing the Esk Farm underpass is that it achieves two objectives - that aggregates two existing onroad crossings into one location. The fact that we are doing that section of road means the opportunity arose to do all of that in one project. So there is a benefit in doing those two combined projects. If we were to just do individual underpasses then the priorities may have been different. So, as it stands at the moment, the one that might be perceived to be not as high priority is because of that opportunity. The Mountford underpass is still a priority and, as Mr Gregory identified, it depends on the capital works program we have on where that might fit in. Nevertheless up to this point, I do not think there has been an active program of building stock underpasses on State roads. We have certainly built them on the Federal Government highway on the AusLink roads but there is not that same funding source for State roads... There is an alternative at Mountford which could be accomplished with some adjustments or some fence movements. I am not exactly up to speed with what the property titles there entail but there would seem to be an opportunity to move stock albeit to an end of a property and then back again under that first existing bridge that is there.

Mr Gregory added:-

Something we really need to keep in context is that the livestock underpass at Mountford would be a project in itself, simply providing a stock underpass. We are doing an underpass on Bishopsbourne to Wickford because we have a need to

rehabilitate the pavement. We have a need to bring that cross-section up to a level that is consistent with the remainder of the road, so effectively the underpass, in a way, is ancillary to the works we are doing. So it is an opportunistic time to put the underpass in. There is a viable alternative at Mountford.

The other issue is, when the Illawarra Main Road study was done and produced, and there was quite an emphasis put on stock underpasses, it was in the context that the State would push to have Illawarra Main Road included in the AusLink network. The Federal Government has made it very clear that that is not going to happen. So it was in the context that it was not appropriate on the AusLink network to have back-road stock crossings, so there was a certain amount of the priority attached to that view of what is an appropriate standard for part of the AusLink network. That will not happen in the foreseeable future. The Federal Government has been very clear that we have an AusLink network which is the Midland Highway through to the Bass Highway, and that is what they are going to accept.

The Committee questioned the witnesses with regard to the cost sharing and consultation with land owners for the underpass. Mr Lee responded:-

The stock underpass is valued at about \$360 000.

Mr Kaczmariski added:-

I am the project manager for [the Lake Secondary Road] project as well, and so what happened there was that we obviously had a design, as we do now, for an adequately constructed and designed stock underpass. When it came to the construction phase there was an opportunity of looking at other options, in which case we did. We need to be very careful about certification of those structures, because in a lot of cases they might comply with guidelines or standards that perhaps are not as rigorous as ours. Nevertheless, the ones on the Lake Highway were put in and they are much lower. You cannot get a vehicle through those except for a quad-bike, so it is realistically just a stock underpass, but they were put in and contributed to by the owners there. There was a contribution to the retro... And we are having the same discussion with the owners here about contribution as well.

Our understanding is that there is a cost-sharing arrangement and there is an agreement to that. The difficulty of course is in difficult times how that might be accomplished, but nevertheless the department has a view that there ought to be a contribution, and others have contributed in the past... There is a verbal agreement and a notation about that but we haven't signed off the finer details, and in most cases the value is then counterbalanced by any property acquisition that we make as well. We might need to pay for any property acquisition and that is taken into consideration...

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to the capacity and drainage of the underpass. Mr Kaczmarski responded:-

They will take a light vehicle... We will be digging a hole effectively to put that underpass in, and there will need to be a drainage line taken out to the river from that, which will be a piped drain. And the management of all that is yet to be finalised as well.

Traffic Disruption

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to what measures would be put in place to minimise traffic disruption during the proposed works. Mr Kaczmarski responded:-

Basically what we require from the successful contractor will be a detailed traffic management plan. It obviously is a busy road, as all of our roads are, and that traffic management plan will need to identify how the traffic will be managed around the construction phase. In fact the construction phasing is basically around managing traffic and we basically build the roundabout to make sure that traffic can get through. There will be delays, of course, and traffic will need to be slowed whilst it is in that work area. There is a reasonable amount of room in some cases to divert traffic slightly around, but nevertheless there will be delays.

Safety Standards

The Committee questioned the witnesses with regard to standards of distance for trees, fences and barriers from the road, and with regard to standards of building materials. Mr Lee responded:-

It is mainly a clear zone distance. For a road there is what is known as a clear zone, which is the area for recovery of a vehicle, so if you lose control you can get back onto the road. So the trees are supposed to be outside that area, or protected by some sort of protection barrier... Depending on the speed, so this is 100 kilometres per hour, I think it is about 6.7 metres. I would have to look it up.

Mr Gregory added:-

We might need to just clarify an issue. When we start talking about road design and construction, people talk about standards. In fact Austroads produces guidelines and there is quite a bit of discretion that needs to be applied using the guidelines, so the Austroads guidelines come out of the Austroads body which is represented by all State road authorities. So when you are going to do a greenfields road you have open slather. You can choose a standard that you wish to apply, and you go and apply it. When we are dealing with brownfields projects we start to be influenced by historic elm trees, buildings, and it is really about what you can achieve and how you apply the guidelines. So it is not always about building the best as building what is appropriate, and what delivers the functional outcome that you are after... There are manufacturers' specifications and manufacturers' guidelines for implementation. There are standards for certain

elements of your design. There are standard tests for crash barriers and there is an Australian standard for crash barriers, and from that they have to comply with certain testing...

When you go from the fence as a material thing that meets a standard in terms of being tested in a certain way, yes, that is quite defined, although manufacturers have some scope in what they design if you put in the standard. When you start to think about how you apply those, then you move into the guidelines, the Austroads guidelines and you undertake risk assessment. You look at whether you are in fact creating a greater risk by putting in a crash barrier than if there wasn't one there. There is a whole range of engineering judgments that are made in applying the guidelines.

Mr Kaczmariski added:-

In this particular case where the elm trees are beside the stock underpass, we are removing the three trees on the end of the one that the underpass goes through, but the other row of trees will be protected by a barrier because otherwise they will need to be removed. So the compromise is, put in a barrier to save the trees, but bearing in mind that putting in barriers as well means that you've got to ensure that they don't become a hazard in themselves. So you've got to look at your end stocks and everything else.

Roundabout use by Truck Drivers

The Committee questioned the witnesses with regard to the design features of the roundabout specific to its useability for trucks. Mr Kaczmariski responded:-

The roundabout is designed so that the trucks and B-doubles will be able to go around without mounting either the inside or the outside parts of the roundabout. Nevertheless, they are designed so that you can still go over them but obviously a lot smoother....

So we have learnt from all of those lessons, and we are proposing a roundabout that will not have those issues. The only other aspect with the Transport Association who represent, in our view, the truck owners, is the issue of fog which they have raised. What we are doing there is we are providing the ducting to put the wiring through at some later stage, so our view is that we ought to assess how the roundabout operates, and if there is an issue during foggy situations then that fog warning system can be retrofitted at some later stage. But once again, fog affects a lot of roads and a lot of junctions and a lot of intersections in Tasmania, and we just have to be mindful about the implications of putting them up wherever for that particular reason.

Speed Environment

The Committee questioned the witnesses with regard to speed limits and environments. Mr Gregory responded:-

...That's about developing the consistent speed environment. The speed environment through a roundabout is much lower and that's effectively what roundabouts do; they bring the speed environment down and give people a greater amount of time to have their decision-making process... The speed limit would be kept at about 80 kph or something of that order but, of course, roundabouts are designed that they are slow in and accelerating out... So we would be hoping to bring the speed environment down considerably. The speed environment is not the speed limit; it is the perception, the driver's perception, of what is an appropriate speed to drive on a particular section of road... On smaller roundabouts you tend to have the stopping effect. With larger roundabouts you have a greater circulating diameter so you tend to have the flow. When people get used to using them you tend to have a lot less stopping... With larger roundabouts you have less stopping because you have a larger road to work in. So when people get used to using roundabouts they start to do gap perception and choosing gaps so you find the actual stopping is much less.

Development of Priorities

The Committee questioned the witnesses as to how the priorities were developed with regard to the Illawarra Road project. Mr Gregory responded:-

I was not involved in this process. There were two phases. One was that there was an engineering assessment, a normal planning assessment that took into account engineering issues, environmental issues, heritage issues, potential benefit-cost ratio, and that developed a list of priorities. Then there was consultation with the community and other stakeholders, and there was an extensive list of stakeholders involved: the Northern Midlands Council, the Meander Valley Council, RACT, the TFGA, Primary Industries, Water and Environment, Longford Main Street Committee, and officers of the department. So there was initial assessment that said these are the things we think are the priorities, and when you are doing that you do factor in social benefits. Then that was taken to the community and they expressed their views about those and their perception was that some of the social benefits that were identified they did not see as being benefits to them, so there was the shift in the Mountford stock underpass as a priority, on the basis that the community did not believe that that was where money was best spent. They preferred to see other options pursued.

Concerns of Landowners

Mr Mackinnon provided the Committee with the following submission with regard to his concern about the changing priorities for the works:-

Very briefly, I farm between Perth and the South Esk River on both sides of the road so I suffer from Federal, State and local roads, railway line, fibre-optic line, a couple of mobile phone towers, a reservoir et cetera, so public infrastructure is really something of importance to the management and the future of the property.

You will note in the submission I made there were extracts from a plan that I have had done by R J Graham from Hobart to look at the future of the property and the key part of that in a couple of bits that I included there is that public infrastructure has a great deal to do with how we manage the property and the effectiveness and the cost of managing the property and maintaining it as a farming operation.

We have had three major incursions via the B52, flying mile, the first being the realignment, the second being the bridge over the South Esk River and the works along with that, and then the B-double passing lanes which led to the reduction in a number of our crossing points et cetera, changed the management substantially and there was compensation for that et cetera. That being said, further changes and increases in traffic volume and expectations of the travelling public are of key concern to me. So too is my ability to put stock across the road and back across the road and for the daily movement of my staff, vehicles et cetera which are going backwards and forwards across that with the ever-increasing volume of everyday traffic, tourist traffic and certainly heavy vehicles and particularly B-doubles and the like.

It is, in my view, a safety issue to my staff, myself and family but also to the travelling public and I think that is a key point to take into account when we are looking at the costing of these things; that it is not to the benefit of the landowner on adjacent sides, it is to the benefit of the travelling public and to some extent a reparation to the landowner from what has been lost over the period of the years.

It is a de facto national highway, as I see it, and I am not quite sure what the situation with it is as far as the department is concerned and AusLink et cetera and where the funding comes from... [Freight] is getting more and more a problem to us and relative to the situation over the railway line.

I appreciate that good works are about to start on the B52. I have identified in my submission concerns that I had are relative to the public consultation and the original discussions with the department some nine or 10 years ago so I will not go into those again but I wanted to highlight the importance of underpasses to both the farming fraternity and the travelling public, in particular the one that you would have driven past today that is further down the priority list at Mountford and the sight distances involved there and the difficulty with moving stock off the highway into one's farm so run-off lanes or whatever they are called, slip lanes, are of particular importance.

I did question where the priorities had changed with the Bishopsbourne intersection. I do not know what the funding allocation is within the works there but, again, I am very much in favour of the Esk Farm underpass but appreciate that I am not trying to push my case ahead of that but I am talking about the road in general. I do question the interchange there... [I am questioning] the amount of funding relative to the priorities and whether the Bishopsbourne mill dam

intersection is a key component of the funding. If it is, I believe if we look back it was not seen as important.

As far as limited access is concerned, regarding the main highway certainly there are parts of that that proceed adjacent to my property that are limited access. My understanding, and I may be incorrect, is that there is a move for parts of the B52 Illawarra to be made limited access, in which case I would highlight the point that on the mainland - and whether it would occur here I don't know - agricultural machinery is barred from limited-access roads. We have the supposed food bowl of the Northern Midlands or the Midlands area. Agricultural machinery must pass along that arterial route but particularly farms that are landlocked, if you like, and the only umbilical cord is the B52. So that is a small one that is of importance to us.

I suppose the other one that is of key concern to me is the funding of underpasses. There have been a number of discussions about this over the years with myself and members of the Department. My concern is very much that as a principle, private individuals should not be funding public infrastructure. I go back to my point earlier on that underpasses in particular or slip roads into farms et cetera are there for the good of the travelling public as well as for the individual farmer that is adjacent on both sides of the road. The costs for the management of a farm that has a major highway through it get more and more expensive as you go on. You have to go further with stock, with implements, the difficulty of getting stock off the road if anything happened with high volumes and the safety of one's personnel and staff et cetera is critical. So I would be very keen for the Committee to take on board, particularly on high-value infrastructure routes such as this, that it is very much the public in the main to fund underpasses et cetera...

The only other one I would highlight very quickly, Mr Chairman - and this is just a general comment for all high-speed roads where there is agricultural activity - is that if stock gets on to a road it is then an extremely difficult task to get stock off the road and that can happen. There are three instances where it happens: it jumps out of the back of a truck, which can often happen on the way to the meatworks or does happen; a car can go through a fence and stock can get on the road; or if there is a hole in the fence and the stock get on the road or they rub the gate open. So then the difficulty to get stock back in when there is a hell of a lot of traffic around, it is at night or whatever, means that we need to give consideration, I believe, to access gates for the removal of stock off the road in case of emergency.

With regard to the movements of his stock across the highway, Mr Mackinnon added:-

...We do [move a lot of stock] and it is particularly hard if you are moving ewes and lambs because it takes more time, there is more difficulty at the moment. We do not have any cattle but they can be exceptionally difficult because they shy at the wet road et cetera, and that is a danger to all concerned. Dogs, people and those using the road.

With regard to moving stock under the existing bridge, Mr Mackinnon added:-

It is impossible when there is a flood and this year it was... [At all other times] it is possible but that is a significantly longer distance that we have to take stock. If you bear in mind, we used to be able to take stock across the road here, but if we are taking stock from there to there and we have to go almost to Longford and back. My key point also is that the location here where vehicles, motorbikes, quad-bikes, people, long lengths of probably five big rolls of hay are going across the road and there is very short sight distance, again it is extremely difficult and a safety problem...

We have one [crossing point] that we use, which is at the reservoir; there is one more that is licensed but is not practical. If you go east from the reservoir approximately 800 metres exactly where the old motor races control tower used to be and there is a single poplar in the jigger, there are two gates there, but from a management viewpoint that is very difficult for us and the traffic is faster there, I suppose.

Access Restrictions to the Mackinnon Property

The Committee questioned the witnesses with regard to the access limitations to Mr Mackinnon's property. Mr Gregory responded:-

What has been mentioned is the prospect of the Illawarra Main Road being proclaimed a 'limited access road'... We have limited access roads that are not part of the National Highway. In Tasmania under Tasmanian legislation 'limited access' has a very specific meaning and it is about limiting access directly from adjacent properties onto the road - that is what we are talking about.

Hugh mentioned roads on the mainland where agricultural machinery is prohibited from being on the road - that is an entirely different scenario. That is typically freeways; I think it is referred to more as 'restricted access' or 'prohibited access', but in Tasmania 'limited access' is very specifically about direct access from a property onto the road. It has nothing to do with what is allowed to drive on the road...

I do not know the full history but I understand a portion of the road through his property is proclaimed as limited access... When the State declares limited access, it is effectively taking away the property owner's right to access and it compensates the property owner.

Works Priorities

The Committee questioned the witnesses with regard to the changing priorities of the Department with regard to the crest and slope improvement at Mountford and how it could be funded. Mr Gregory responded:-

It is not on the Forward Work Program... The Forward Work Program typically runs out four or five years and as the program gets further out it is, if you like, more rubbery and it is not as solid in its context. So we know exactly what we are doing this year, we are 99 per cent sure of what we are doing next year but by the time we get five years out we might be 50 per cent sure. By the time we get five years out not everything has committed funding, whereas the things we are doing this year have committed funding and next year will have committed funding...

The Federal Government has been very firm that it does not think it should be funding what it calls 'parallel works', so it would consider the Illawarra Main Road to be -although it does not meet the strict definition of parallel - a parallel route to the Midland Highway and Bass Highway and their view is they fund improvements on the Midland Highway and the Bass Highway, so why would they fund another connection?

The AusLink funding which is now known as the National Land Transport Network is targeted at what the Federal Government believes to be projects of national significance. That very much constrains what they think money should be available for.

DOCUMENTS TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE

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

- Department of Infrastructure, Energy & Resources - Illawarra Main Road – Bishopbourne Road to Wickford and Poatina Main Road Junction – Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, October 2009; and
- Hugh Mackinnon, Submission dated 14 October 2009
- “Options for Upgrading”, Mr Kaczmariski, 30 October 2009

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The need for the proposed works was firmly established. These works will improve road safety, reduce the maintenance costs, and improve the operation of the road.

The proposed works at site one will provide road users with clearer right of way and reduce speed through the junction. At site two, the works will eliminate conflict between road traffic and two stock crossing locations by providing a single shared stock

underpass, increase the stopping sight distance to match the speed limit, and improve the delineation through the provision of edge lines and the upgrading of guide posts. The severity of off the road crashes will also be reduced by the removal and minimisation of roadside hazards.

The provision of sealed shoulders at both sites will reduce road edge maintenance, as will the use of an overly to increase the strength of the pavement, and the provision of extensive areas of new pavement.

The Committee was of the view that while the previously prioritised proposed works for the Mountford stock underpass were important, later public consultation and circumstances had brought about changes in priorities for redevelopment. As a result, the proposed works at the intersection of Bishopsbourne Road and Illawarra Main Road, including a stock underpass, take precedence over the proposed stock underpass at Mountford.

Accordingly, the Committee recommends the project, in accordance with the documentation submitted, at an estimated total cost of \$6,200,000.

**Parliament House
Hobart
4 December 2009**

**Hon. A. P. Harriss M.L.C.
Chairman**