

## **Community Consultation of Duplication of Midway Point and Sorell Causeways – feedback.**

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

I note on your community consultation page <https://engage.stategrowth.tas.gov.au/tasman-highway-duplication-midway-point-causeway> that you mention “one-on-one meetings with key and impacted stakeholders”, this has not occurred,

Instead, I have had to attend a community consultation meeting in Sorell to see the plans and to learn of and discuss some aspects of these with one of the responsible engineers, Andrew Knight.

I attach my email to him which forms part of this submission, and I expect answers to those queries. The below is additional:

### **1. Environmental assessment including littoral and terrestrial habitat**

The environmental assessment of my land (including a beach) at the NE of my property that you currently propose to acquire has yet to occur. It is therefore incorrect to state to inquiring parties at the consultation meeting, online and in the media that you plan to commence works on this project in 2025 “subject to Federal approval”.

The Federal approval process cannot begin until DCCEEW are supplied with the necessary information, which is required under the EPBC Act to be complete, truthful, accurate and science based. What you should be telling the public is that “until we conduct the necessary environmental assessments of the proposed land acquisitions – which includes identification and mapping of the land critical to the survival of the 3 Federally-listed flora species, Federal assessment cannot begin. As this mapping has not been done in the past 6 years, despite ample opportunity and numerous requests to do so, this project start date will depend on when we do this mapping and submit complete, truthful and accurate information to DCCEEW for their assessment”.

What is the timeline for this to be done?

Only after you submit a complete referral and the guidelines for the PER are provided by DCCEEW can you estimate a construction start date.

### **2. Wildlife/fauna impacts**

This proposal has serious impacts on wildlife; feedback on the threatened seastar and migratory birds in the Ramsar area will doubtless be covered by other submissions. For terrestrial animals, this project (and the adjacent and related proposed widening of the Tasman Highway to the west) requires wildlife underpasses and/or overpasses AND virtual fencing.

It is not good enough to ignore this issue or say “it’s too expensive”. There is a State

government policy on wildlife protection and roadkill reduction that needs to be followed, see eg <https://nre.tas.gov.au/Documents/Roadkill.pdf>

The section of this Causeway proposal on the Cambridge side passes between a golf course with wildlife habitat and grassy forage areas, and a permanent forested area on Milford, home to numerous wildlife including listed spotted-tailed quolls and Tasmanian devils, plus other species. These are not going to go away; it is not the Brooker Hwy with built-up areas on either side and never will be.

By ignoring this issue, you are perpetuating this carnage for decades, one which has cemented Tasmania's reputation as "the roadkill capital of the world". Motorists including tourists (95% of car-driving tourists to Tasmania use this road) and cyclists using the bike track are going to be faced with the continued daily spectacle of dead and injured animals on or adjacent to the roadsides, plus damage to their vehicles and risk to human life.

Increasing this highway to 4 lanes wide with a central barrier will make it virtually impossible for wildlife to cross safely, so the design as currently proposed will make the situation far worse than currently, and this needs to be addressed now, at the design stage. This also applies to the section at the eastern end of Midway Point, where there are known spotted-tailed quolls and echidnas.

There are feasible engineering solutions to this, and a State government policy to reduce roadkill and protect wildlife. I am well aware that Pitt and Sherry engineers do not care about wildlife and that it is considered irrelevant. However, in this (and the neighbouring) proposal, DSG/State Roads need to provide design solutions to take this ongoing problem into account, to comply with State policy, for the reasons outlined above, and to minimise harm and suffering to these increasingly endangered species.

Hobart International Airport have for nearly the past decade installed and maintained virtual fencing along Grueber Ave and have demonstrated that at 80 kph speed limit there is a 65% reduction in roadkill and accidents involving animals. Virtual fencing is an absolute minimum requirement for the western end of this current proposal (traffic volumes are much lower on Grueber Ave, so crossings there are not essential). [This also applies to the adjacent stretch of SETS between the HIA interchange and this Causeway duplication proposal].

Another issue are nesting seabirds on the Causeways. Your engineers need to design and implement barriers to prevent young chicks wandering onto the roads, which are a known and frequent cause of traffic accidents, and of course largely fatal for the birds.

My comment on the need to increase environmental water flow between Upper and Lower Pittwater is included in the attached email. The water flow under McGee's Bridge may be acceptable from the engineering perspective, but environmentally is it not, and this is a once-in-a-century opportunity to fix this growing environmental problem, caused by significantly increased nutrient load in the Coal River and siltation since the Causeway was built in the 1890s, which appears to have been totally ignored and not assessed.

### **3. Assessment of alternative routes**

I note in some documentation that was supplied to me previously (when I was informed by DSG that there would be no impact on my property, as at that point I was told all the duplication would be on the other side of the existing Causeway) that the assessment of some alternative routes was conducted 2 years after this route was already selected, and a cost to the taxpayer of circa \$40,000. Clearly this is justification after the event.

I also note that this included no assessment of a straight-line route through part of the Tasmania Golf Club, which would likely completely avoid significant impacts on the aforementioned habitat critical to the survival of the Federally-listed species, save a significant amount of taxpayers' money and commuters' time (especially during construction), and potentially enable a 2.3 km stretch of SETS to have a 100kph speed limit, further reducing commuter time. This would also remove the notoriously dangerous corner on the adjacent segment of SETS, which is another purported benefit of this and the adjacent project: to improve (human) road safety.

The current Causeway design also assumes that the proposed adjacent section of SETS, ie the widening of the Tasman Highway between the Causeway and the HIA Interchange, will follow the route that was submitted by DSG to DCCEEW in December 2024. This may not be accepted by the Federal Minister because

1. mapping of the habitat critical to the survival of the 3 Federally Listed flora species is yet to be done by DSG and until it is, DCCEEW cannot properly assess it;
2. indirect and facilitated impacts of the modified designs have yet to be assessed or quantified, and (if required) offsets planned; and
3. this section of SETS is currently without a valid DA.

Regarding this current proposal, that is a significant assumption and risk.

Thank you and I look forward to discussing these issues plus direct impacts on my property at the "one-on-one" meeting.

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