



1997

PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

**STATION ROAD BRIDGE AND ROAD
REALIGNMENT LAUNCESTON**

Brought up by Mr Cox and Ordered by the House of Assembly to be printed

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Mr Wilson (Chairman)
Mr Wing

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Mr Cox
Mr Goodluck
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INTRODUCTION

The Committee has the honour to report to the House of Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Works Committee Act 1914* on the proposal to construct a new Station Road Bridge and Road Realignment Launceston

PROPOSAL AND COSTING

Proposal

The construction proposal consists of the following main items:—

- New alignment of Station Road some 1 kilometre long between Quarantine Road and Johnson Road, located south of the existing.
- Concrete bridge over North Esk River to suit new road alignment.
- Roundabout at new junction of Station, Quarantine and Penquite Roads.

Features of the new road alignment and associated works are:—

- Pavement width of 7.0 metres, with 2.0 metre wide shoulders.
- Provision of a separate 2.0 metre wide pedestrian/cycle pathway on the upstream (northern) side.
- Roadway level provides protection against 1 in 20 year Average Recurrence Interval flood (i.e., not overtopped by that flood).
- Geotechnical investigation indicates that the underlying materials are adequate to support the proposed 2.0 m high fill across the flood plain, without excessive settlement.
- At grade level crossing of railway, with flashing light protection. The traffic volumes for road and rail do not justify grade separation.
- Existing residents on Station Road near Penquite Road will reside in a cul-de-sac with no through traffic.
- The roundabout provides a safe interchange between the sub-arterial route and the local road system at Penquite Road.
- Minimal severance of the river flat farmland.
- Adequate reservation width for landscaping.

Costing

The major project components and estimated costs are as follows:—

	\$
Property Acquisition	0.5 million
Roadworks	2.8 million
Bridgeworks	1.7 million
TOTAL COST	5.0 million

Cost Sharing

It is proposed that costs be shared between Launceston City Council and the State Government on the basis of existing responsibilities, plus an additional fixed contribution by the Government, as follows:—

- The Government is currently responsible for the Station Road Bridges, and hence will fund the replacement bridgeworks at actual cost.
- The Council is currently responsible for the road and hence will fund the new roadworks including the associated property acquisition, at actual cost less the fixed Government contribution detailed below.
- In view of the use of the road by through traffic, the Government will make a fixed contribution of \$750 000 towards the roadworks.

The estimated cost sharing is therefore summarised as:—

	\$
Launceston City Council.....	2.55 million
State Government.....	2.45 million
TOTAL COST	5.0 million

The new alignment of Station Road, new bridge over the North Esk River, and associated works are required to provide an adequate and safe sub-arterial and truck route as part of a link from the Tasman to the Midland and Bass Highways, as well as serving local traffic needs including pedestrians and cyclists.

The State Government will be responsible for the North Esk River Bridge and associated box culvert, plus a fixed contribution of \$750 000 towards the roadworks.

EVIDENCE

The Committee commenced its inquiry on Wednesday, 18 December 1996. The Committee inspected the area where the proposed work is to be carried out, followed by a public hearing at the Launceston Library.

The following witnesses gave evidence at the hearing:

Alderman Tony Peck, Mayor of Launceston, and
Mr Terry Eaton, Senior Planning Engineer, Launceston City Council;

Mr Gregory Bok, President, St Leonards Primary School,
Mr Rick Shipway, Queechy High School Parents and Friends Association, and
Mr Ewan LeFevre, Principal, St Leonards Primary School;

Mr Ian Gibbs, Manager, Planning and Development, and
Mr Edward Pitman, Senior Engineer, Bridge Design, Department of Transport;

Mr Anthony Rowell.

The first witnesses to give evidence were Alderman Peck and Mr Eaton. Alderman Peck stated the Launceston City Council's support for the project and in doing so outlined the background and the funding arrangements. In summary, the State Government is funding the cost of the bridge and the Council is paying for the roadworks, plus an additional contribution of \$750 000 towards the cost of the roadworks from the State Government. It was explained that the existing situation is sub-standard and is prone to flooding every year and is dangerous, as evidenced by a death in 1995.

Mr Eaton explained the processes the Council has been through in planning the proposal and the community consultation as well as the outcome of the Land Use Planning Appeal Tribunal which supported the selected route in its decision stating "On the balance, taking into account all of the evidence before it, the tribunal finds that the proposed development is appropriate".

The Committee questioned Mr Eaton about what other options were considered for the route. Mr Eaton replied "...if we go through the evidence that I produced at the planning appeal, really when one looked at this on the basis of the engineering factors that we had to take into account, we really ended up with the single proposal, if you like, in terms of the shortest road length we could build, the requirements to cross the railway line, the requirements to link into Penquite Road, the requirements to look at existing grades. Whilst we sought to look as widely as we could, when we looked at all the engineering parameters we came down fairly closely to the alignment that we selected." In being asked specifically about an overpass for the railway line being considered Mr Eaton said "Our original concept was looking at an overpass and saying we will cross over the railway line, assuming we could landfill and causeway it. But when we got the geotechnical information it indicated we would have great difficulty in supporting the fill, we would need to go to structure." Mr Eaton added that the soil foundation in the vicinity is stable enough to hold the two metre high causeway in the current proposal but not something like the five metres required to pass over the railway line.

The Committee then heard from Messrs Bok, Shipway and LeFevre. They stated their strong support for the proposal and urged that it be commenced as soon as possible. They stated they had been in regular contact with the Council in the planning stages and have had numerous opportunities to have input into the project. Mr LeFevre strongly stated the need for the project to proceed because of the danger to the children who use that section of road on a daily basis. He holds a constant concern of duty-of-care for children and "travelling across those bridges when two buses meet or a bus and a truck is horrendous".

Mr Gibbs and Mr Pitman next appeared before the Committee. Mr Pitman confirmed the evidence given by Alderman Peck regarding funding and stated "It is a two-part commitment: a commitment to fund the bridge because the State Government at the moment is responsible for the existing timber bridges. They are declared bridges and they are a State Government responsibility and not a council responsibility. So the State Government would commit to the actual cost of the bridges but in addition to that they have made a fixed proposal for \$750 000 towards the roadworks." And further, the State Government contribution of \$2.45 million is made up of \$1.7 million for the cost of the bridgeworks and the \$750 000 fixed contribution towards the road works.

Mr Rowell was the next witness to give evidence. Mr Rowell was opposed to the proposed route. He explained that he was related to one of the people whose house was to be acquired and demolished. He was concerned that the best route was not chosen for this and other reasons, whilst agreeing that the current situation was not satisfactory.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The evidence presented to the Committee demonstrated the need for the proposed work to go ahead. The current condition of the road is definitely substandard and there are serious concerns regarding safety. It is an unfortunate fact that four houses have to be demolished in the process, but there is strong community support for the project and it is in the greater public interest for the project to proceed and in the form presented to the Committee. For these reasons, the Committee is strongly of the opinion that the works should be commenced and completed as a matter of urgency.

Accordingly, the Committee recommends the project, in accordance with the plans and specifications submitted, at an estimated total cost of \$5 000 000.

Parliament House, Hobart
11 March 1997

S. J. WILSON M.L.C., Chairman.