

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET AT CRADLE MOUNTAIN LODGE, CRADLE MOUNTAIN ON THURSDAY 24 JANUARY 2002.

CRADLE MOUNTAIN TOURIST ROAD SEALING FROM THE VISITOR CENTRE TO DOVE LAKE, INCLUDING THE WALDHEIM SPUR

PETER TODD, MANAGER, ASSET MANAGEMENT, DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE, ENERGY AND RESOURCES; **TIM NEVARD**, CONSULTANT, PITT AND SHERRY; **HANK SCHINKEL**, SENIOR RANGER, PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE; **ROY CORDINER**, REPRESENTING CRADLE MOUNTAIN INFRASTRUCTURE REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAM; AND **ALLEN CARMEN-BROWN**, DISTRICT PLANNER NORTH WEST, PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Wing) - I welcome you all here today. I am pleased to see the interest in this project and we welcome any contributions that anybody present may wish to make during the course of the hearing. We will first of all take the departmental submission and then anybody who would like to give evidence at any stage is very welcome to do so.

We have made the inspection and I'd like to thank everybody who assisted us in that, with providing information. We found that interesting and helpful and we appreciate all the help we had.

All members of the committee are here and we are very pleased that Mr Greg Hall, member for Rowallan in the Legislative Council, is able to be here today. This area is in Mr Hall's electorate.

We have received a written submission from Mr Peter Sims, OAM, so I think if we resolve to take that into evidence. Mr Sims has expressed some concern that he had difficulty in getting access to a copy of the submission and we, as a committee, did everything possible to have that made available through the department. So he was given access to that; it was difficult communicating with him.

Mr TODD - With your leave, Mr Chairman, could I just introduce the group and the various aspects that each of the members of this group will make in terms of their evidence. That might just assist the committee in understanding where we're going with that evidence.

Firstly, I will discuss a little about the background and reference some of the earlier safety works. Then Mr Nevard will talk about the design work and pick up a number of environmental issues. I will then follow on to talk about the construction phase and the cost estimates and so on. Mr Hank Schinkel from the Parks and Wildlife will talk about

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

some of the site operational implications and then Mr Carmen-Brown will address some overall site planning issues with reference to the Cradle Mountain area, in particular the zoning plans. Mr Roy Cordiner will provide further supporting information on other elements of the infrastructure program within the Cradle Mountain area. So that is how we intend to proceed, if the committee is happy with that.

CHAIR - Certainly.

Mr TODD - Firstly, can I thank and acknowledge the committee's permission for the department to issue the request for tender for the project on the understanding that the project would not proceed until the department had received the committee's approval. I would just like to acknowledge the fact that that permission was given by the committee and thank them for it.

As the committee would be aware, the Cradle Mountain tourist road provides access into Tasmania's World Heritage area and one of the State's premier tourist destinations - Dove Lake and the surrounding area. The current road within the World Heritage area is narrow and winding with a rustic bush character; it transverses a range of vegetation communities ranging from forests to grasslands and provides visitors to the area with vistas of the surrounding mountains. The existing road from the visitor centres to Ronny Creek is gravel of variable width between 3 and 5.5 metres, it is winding. From Ronny Creek to Dove Lake is a much more open alignment, a substantially higher standard with widths up to seven metres. The Waldheim spur is little more than a single track with very limited opportunity for passing. Increasing traffic demands have created parking issues within the park and have resulted in some operational and safety issues along the road itself. In addition, with the increasing traffic volumes, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain a gravel road into Dove Lake in good condition. It's often very rough and, particularly during period of heavy rain, it is severe; there is severe erosion. Maintenance operations include gravel resheeting, regular grading, clearing of drains and so on and it is becoming more and more difficult without having substantial impact also on the environment in those operations.

To give a little bit of background into the planning that has gone on. During the 1990s the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources and the Parks and Wildlife Service undertook a considerable amount of planning to establish their requirements for the upgrading of the road. This work was undertaken taking into account the requirements of the World Heritage Area Management Plan and the Cradle Valley Site Management Plan. There are other works being planned at the moment, which include a walking track from the visitor centre to Ronny Creek, the undergrounding of services and other works associated with possible shuttle bus services and building infrastructure.

Before establishing the upgrading requirements for the road this department undertook a number of studies, which are listed in the document that was provided to the committee. I won't go through all those but it picks up on a wide range of issues with regard to botanical, traffic management, landscape issues, accident management - snow and ice and so on - pavement issues and so on. The State Government has allocated funds for this financial year from the State infrastructure fund for the upgrading of this road and this brings to a culmination a number of years of planning that have gone to bring us to this point.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

I would like to make the committee aware that following a bus accident on the road in February 2001, which resulted in multiple fatalities, an independent safety audit of the road was undertaken. While the accident records did not indicate there were major safety problems with the road, a number of recommendations to improve safety were made and works to address items requiring immediate attention from the road safety audit were completed in June 2001. Those works will be incorporated into the new grading. Those works were the placement of the safety barriers, some site improvements and curve widening and the placement of markers along the side of the road. Again, an inquest was held into that accident and that was conducted in Burnie in October 2001. The findings for that inquest have not been handed down as yet.

CHAIR - Is there any indication when they will be?

Mr TODD - I contacted the Coroner's Office yesterday and was advised that no date has been set for that to be handed down.

Just a little bit of background in terms of economic and social justification. The World Heritage Management Plan 1999 includes the following management prescriptions in relation to the road and I will quote, if I may. It says: 'To retain the Cradle Mountain Road from the visitor centre to Cradle Valley car park as a narrow, winding, tree-lined road to protect the character of the park, undertake minor upgrading of the road from Pencil Pine to the Waldheim turn-off in Cradle Valley, maintain the final section of the Dove Lake Road from Waldheim turn-off to Dove Lake to a similar standard to that existing, mute the road surface to reduce visual impact from the day walk area and the road may be sealed to reduce environmental damage to the roadside vegetation.'

As I indicated before, it is becoming more and more difficult to maintain the road. It's often very rough and there's a lot of material being washed off into adjacent vegetation. There is also the associated disruptions to visitors that occurs with that work, which needs to happen on a substantial basis every two years. Some of the environmental issues associated with maintaining a gravel road include: deposition of eroded pavement gravel onto the areas of sensitive alpine vegetation, and including dust problems; and also the risk of inadvertent introduction of phytophthora or other diseases and weeds into the park.

I would like now to speak about the project objectives which are set out the submission but I think it is useful to highlight them at this point. These are to improve the road to reduce the environmental impacts associated with gravel washing and dust; to reduce the visual impact and improve the safety for the road users, while not encouraging an increase in the general speed environment of the road; to maintain the natural setting and cultural integrity of the park by restricting the road to its existing boundaries without attempting to change the gradient so as to maintain the natural experience; to protect the park's visual and natural values through all stages, including construction and future operation and maintenance; to ensure the design of the road integrates service mains to accommodate future needs; to design solutions suited to the climatic conditions of the valley and to provide protection for native vegetation and wildlife; to employ adequate and appropriate measures to ensure that weeds and diseases are not carried into the park by construction plant and equipment, staff and vehicles or through imported construction material; and also to assist in the rehabilitation of presently degraded areas with excess top soil from any new disturbed areas.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

I would just like to talk about the scope of the work which is, firstly, to provide for a single lane road with passing bays to put in the visitors centre and Ronny Creek formalising existing passing areas, extending and widening them where necessary, providing a sealed road between Ronny Creek and Dove Lake and incorporating similar traffic control measures with formalised passing bays; provide for a single-sealed lane with passing bays along the Waldheim Spur Road and addressing surface and subsurface drainage issues; to improve the base course as required and sealed; provide traffic and information signage in keeping with the natural and visual values of the area. That completes the evidence that I wish to present at this time, Mr Chairman.

CHAIR - Thank you, Mr Todd. Would any members of the committee like to ask Mr Todd any questions at this stage? There will be any opportunity later to ask him, and other witnesses, questions.

Mr TODD - Mr Chairman - it may be useful to the committee - I have some copies of the project design brief which was produced by the department, which may be useful for the committee to consider. This may be useful for the committee to consider as well.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. We will take one into evidence and if each member of the committee could have a copy and I would ask that a copy be made available to the gentleman from Parks and Wildlife - perhaps one to each of the groups or one each if there are enough available otherwise one for each of the two groups.

I would point out at this stage that we are pleased to see representatives here from Parks and Wildlife Service because the committee decided at our last meeting to ask the two departments to give an opportunity for anybody in each of the departments working in this immediate area to come along and hear the submissions and, if they so wished at any stage, to give evidence to it because we wanted to have the opportunity of hearing from anybody who was directly involved in activities here in the government service to give us their views, so that's why I ask that a copy be made available to the gentlemen who have come along.

Mr TODD - Mr Chairman, following on from that point, we have also Mr John Fenech who is our maintenance supervisor who looks after the maintenance of the road.

CHAIR - That's good.

Mr TODD - And he's here to ask questions also but I am sure he would be able to give information on that as well if the committee so required.

CHAIR - Thank you. So he has had access probably to this document, has he?

Mr TODD - I can get him a copy.

Mr GREEN - The question of the services you have talked about. From Ronny Creek to the houses, I understand that the majority of the services are going to go under the road? Well, from Dove Lake to where the existing houses are - the services will actually be built under the road and from there the sewerage will be held in a tank and taken by pipeline along basically the walking track - does this mean that the walking track has to be built at the same time as the road?

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr TODD - No, it doesn't have to, no.

Mr GREEN - You will be able to build that first section to the houses as part of the road construction and then not necessarily have to worry about the second section until after -

Mr TODD - That is right.

Mr CORDINER - They are putting ducts under the road to house the services so that the services can be put in when the project for that goes ahead, so at the moment it is merely making provision for them in the future by providing ducts. The cables won't be drawn in at the time.

Mrs NAPIER - I was going to ask about the issue of the gravel that seems to be washing in various stages that we saw - what extent could better drainage and culverts be used to overcome that problem?

Mr TODD - I don't think it is really the drainage; it's the integrity and the way the surface holds together that's causing that to drain into the vegetation. I don't think it is so much an issue of the drainage, but it is a case of being able to hold the surface and the pavement to retain its integrity, so I think that's the issue of being able to do that. The provision of culverts and so on is important for drainage but it is not going to really assist unless the road is sealed to stop the material actually getting into the culverts.

GREG HALL, MLC, MEMBER FOR ROWALLAN, WAS CALLED AND MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION.

Mr HALL - Just following on from what Sue said, in terms of the quality of the gravel that is currently used on the road, there has been a lot of issue made about the dust and everything else. Now I am wearing another hat: in our next-door municipality, we now use a Brambles composite gravel. We have significantly reduced the dust by about 80 per cent and the maintenance is much less. Maybe availability has been a problem, being this far away, but certainly that issue could well have been addressed by using a much better and different quality gravel.

Mr TODD - There are options to use other gravels. I know there are some limitations on which quarries we are able to obtain material from because they need to be cleared of any phytophthora and weeds and so on. I don't know the details of that. I can get that information if you wish, but that is my understanding: there are limitations on the material we can actually use. Mr Carman-Brown may be able to assist; I don't know whether he is involved in that area or not.

Mrs NAPIER - I would be interested if that could be redirected to one of the officers who might be able to indicate which alternative quarries have been assessed.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

JOHN FENECH, SENIOR SUPERVISOR NETWORK OPERATIONS NORTH WEST, DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE, ENERGY AND RESOURCES WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

Mr FENECH - Yes, we use various sources of gravel for the Cradle road. Cost is an issue. We are bound to a contract and the current gravels we use have been cleared by the Parks and Wildlife Service for use in the parks. So the point of using other sources of gravel is an option that could be investigated and we could look at that down the track. But it would certainly have to be cleared through the Parks and Wildlife Service.

Mrs NAPIER - So are we saying no other alternative sources of gravel have actually been assessed for the potential for phytophthora or weed infestation?

Mr SCHINKEL - There are a series of gravel pits along the coast that have been assessed, and out of about eight, I think, two were not suitable. That is just off the top of my head.

Mrs NAPIER - Can you tell me whether they contain the types of gravels that Mr Hall was referring to?

Mr SCHINKEL - No, I can't.

Mrs NAPIER - Where do you get your gravel from, Greg?

Mr HALL - Brambles, I can tell you that.

CHAIR - In the fourth dot point under 'Project Objectives', it says: 'To ensure the design of the roadworks integrates service mains to accommodate future needs'. What service mains are referred to there?

Mr TODD - I think this is the point Mr Cordiner made earlier, that it was purely to put ducting in there for the provision of those services once that separate project was approved.

CHAIR - Which ones does that cover?

Mr CORDINER - Between Dove Lake and -

CHAIR - No, no, which type of services?

Mr CORDINER - Power, communications and sewerage.

CHAIR - And are there any others envisaged for future needs?

Mr CORDINER - No, we think that is adequate. It includes both the Waldheim junction to Waldheim, and Waldheim Junction to Dove Lake sections, both feeding back to that pumping station at Waldheim Junction.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

CHAIR - In the dot points under 'Project Objectives and General Principles', I don't see any reference to visitor satisfaction or visitor needs or visitor views or requirements. Am I correct in that? I would have thought that was a very important aspect, to cater for the needs and the requirements of visitors, because without visitors we would not be here. It doesn't seem to rate as a priority and I was surprised to learn on the bus tour that there had not been any recent survey done of visitors as to what their reaction would be if there were to be a shuttle bus service imposed on the area. I just invite any comment on that.

Mr NEVARD - I was going to say, could I have a look? I don't have a copy of it in the brief, the consultant's brief and project design brief.

CHAIR - We haven't had an opportunity of reading that. I am going from the section under paragraph 4, 'Project Objectives and General Principles', and I think there is no reference to that matter which I certainly regard as important.

Mrs NAPIER - The points are exactly the same as in the Cradle Mountain tourist road submission to the Public Works.

CHAIR - Mr Todd has given evidence about the possibility of a shuttle bus service. On the tour Mr Schinkel was more definite about that and talked about when the shuttle bus service would be introduced, and we had a discussion on the bus about that. So there is in some people's minds some feeling of inevitability about that. But I am surprised there is no suggestion of any survey having been done to assess what the reaction of users would be to that, as I feel that it would be quite dramatic.

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - If I may, Mr Chairman. Firstly, to clarify, there is a planning intention to introduce a bus service. This idea has been floated since 1982, and now with the draft visitor services zone plan, and that had gone through a public consultation. I must also add that that particular document -

Mr CORDINER - 1992.

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - 1992, sorry - that that particular document went through a public consultation process, but it is non-statutory in nature, okay? Following on from that in 1999 was a further study looking more intently at the infrastructure requirements for the area, and that formed a major component - the introduction of a transport system. It looked at a number of different possibilities and did an evaluation. The upturn of that was that the best possibility for this area would be to adopt a bus shuttle system. The bus shuttle system is to address the growing visitation into the area by visitors and the environmental degradation that is occurring because of those numbers. At the moment - well, I wouldn't even say at the moment - the environmental degradation is occurring because of those numbers. I can quote you, just to substantiate that, some numbers of visitation increases over the years: in 1993 there were 120 406 people who visited the Cradle area and that has increased in 2000 - that is not quite what I wanted to point out. That was interstate and overseas; it didn't take into account how many people are coming locally as well.

Mr CORDINER - I've got your figures here, if I might, Mr Chairman, from your demand analysis -

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - That would be a better source, if I could turn that aspect over for Roy.

Mr CORDINER - I will go back to where Allen started. In 1991 there was 153 000 total person entries, of which 81 registered from overseas.

CHAIR - What page are you reading from, Mr Cordiner?

Mr CORDINER - I am sorry, I am just quoting another document to make sure that -

CHAIR - Would you tender that in evidence?

Mr CORDINER - If you wish.

CHAIR - If we're quoting from it, it should be in evidence.

Mr CORDINER - By all means, yes.

CHAIR - What is the document?

Mr CORDINER - It's a demand analysis that Mr Carman-Brown prepared as part of this program to have a look at the visitor numbers, the characteristics and the trends and it is part of the planning process that I would like to discuss when my turn comes to tell you what we are doing in the broader picture.

Mrs NAPIER - I would be interested to hear the numbers.

CHAIR - Yes. Please proceed, but we will take it into evidence.

Mr CORDINER - Just quickly, it is 153 000 total in 1991 to 200 700 in 1999-2000 and it jumped very sharply from 1998-99, which was 185 000. I believe this year the trends looks like it is slightly down, is that right - I think it's correct.

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - Yes, it's down to 185 000 the last year. This year it seems to be holding, if not increasing, but that's not substantiated as of yet.

Mrs NAPIER - What are those figures? What do they include?

Mr CORDINER - That is total visitors and interstate and overseas visitors, which is the figure that tourism surveys quote, is 160 000. So there's a very high proportion in all of these figures of interstate and overseas.

CHAIR - For 1999.

Mr CORDINER - In all of the years, it seems -

CHAIR - But 160 000 for 1999?

Mr CORDINER - 160 000 for 1999-2000, as against the 200 700 for that total year.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mrs NAPIER - How are those figures acquired - the figures you're quoting?

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - They are acquired through various means - there are traffic counts, there are people counts and there are surveys that have been carried on regularly.

Mrs NAPIER - The tourism figures that are quoted in 41 in the report are Tas visitor survey exit -

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - Yes, that's an exit survey and it's a bit different and it doesn't get the full picture because not everybody answers it. Thanks very much for that, Mr Cordiner, if I may continue.

To continue on, with this increase from those numbers that have just been quoted to the committee, you can see that there has been over the last 10-year period a dramatic increase and this has to do with general upgrading and general tourist marketing of the area, more accommodation on the outside of the park, people staying longer - all these factors come into play and those factors will still continue to come into play as the promotion of the area is highlighted - this being the icon of the State as far as tourism goes. While we are getting various types of visitors - short stay visitors, comfort visitors, people who want to spend a lot more time out on the trails and what not - those numbers are all going to increase and there comes a point where you reach a carrying capacity and we have to plan for that before we exceed that carrying capacity and therefore the need to look at establishing an alternative bus transportation system. There will always be room for cars to be entering the park but we also have to look at reducing the number of actual vehicles entering the park for a number of reasons and, as it is now, we do have a bus system that does go into the park by the different tourist operators.

As I said, this is a planning intention and planning intentions take a while to develop. In this particular case we have been more intensely looking at the infrastructure, including the bus transportation system more intently, with further studies being done. There are other studies that have to eventuate, as well as there is a need for a number of approval processes and hurdles to be achieved. So this is not a foregone conclusion but it is an intention that we're working towards.

CHAIR - The compulsory shuttle bus system is quite different from the optional one at the moment. Do you feel that a compulsory shuttle bus system would significantly reduce the people who are prepared to go into Dove Lake in those circumstances?

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - I cannot substantiate that because we will have studies yet to undertake, but from my general appreciation I would say there would be some people who will choose not to come but those numbers would be more than adequately met by new visitors - different visitors.

CHAIR - Are you able to say why there hasn't been any survey done recently as to the likely effect of that? I mean, you have all these hundreds and thousands of people coming in here and it seems that they haven't been consulted in recent times, notwithstanding the fact that the proposal for a shuttle bus service seems to be firming up without any decision having been made.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - I cannot say why that has not occurred in the past because I've only been on the scene a relatively short time - the past year - but I'm sure that we would attempt to do further surveys. In fact that would be required and we've talked about that already and we're approaching discussions with the Department of Tourism all the time on this matter of finding out user-satisfaction - who's coming, why they're coming and what numbers and what their attitudes are.

CHAIR - I started by pointing out that it seemed that there was nothing in the 'Project Objectives' or 'General Principles' that took into account the wishes or needs or effects on visitors, and that is still my impression. Those factors don't seem to have rated highly in the presentation in this submission, but we'll come back to that later.

Mrs NAPIER - Could I just ask one question on that? During the bus tour we heard that tourism people had some input in terms of what they thought was important - the narrow winding road, the importance of being able to see the animals and so on - where did that information come from? Which tourism body?

Mr NEVARD - From Tourism Tasmania.

Mrs NAPIER - Are you aware of any surveys that they've done of both interstate tourists and locals, who have just come for the day for a trip as they always have, of what source from which they drew that conclusion?

Mr NEVARD - I'm not aware of any surveys specifically. In the course of discussion it emerged that they were really professing an industry view, an operator view, rather than a visitor view - if that gives you some assistance.

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - If I may clarify that, Mrs Napier, through the Chair. There have been a number of surveys that have been done over the years by Tourism Tasmania, as well as Parks and Wildlife Service, and we trade numbers and results off all the time. Within the report on the demand analysis that Mr Cordiner has already tabled it extensively quotes not only the statistics but the attitudes and findings of surveys that have been done more recently.

Mrs NAPIER - Are those surveys available to the committee that would give an indication of how that information has been drawn?

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - Yes. That will be in the demand analysis.

Mrs NAPIER - It could be useful, but I think obviously we're keen to get an idea who is indicating that they would be willing to travel on shuttle buses or that think it's important to maintain a dirt road or winding road that is narrowed off right beyond passing bays, and so on.

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - If I may also say, one of the problems with surveys of this type is that what they are unable to ask is those people in the future who will be coming here, and the types of visitors that are increasingly coming here - the first-timers from overseas, from interstate, who haven't seen the area before. Of course those people have not been asked and yet we still have to cater for those numbers.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

CHAIR - But you get a very good idea of that from the variety of people who are travelling here at the moment. Every time I come to Cradle Mountain I meet quite a number of people from overseas. They're coming every day so you don't speculate about what the future ones will need; you have the present ones here now which would be indicative of what the future ones are going to be.

Mr HALL - Just a question on the visitor numbers. Have any projections been done into the future as to what visitor numbers may be in the next couple of decades? I note historically we talk about from 1991 from 153 000 up to about 185 000 this year, and part of that steep increase may well have been due to the increased accessibility because of the road which has been sealed to the north getting into the Cradle Mountain National Park. It seems to me that a lot of what we are talking about here with shuttle buses and improving the road then impinges upon just what is going to be increased visitor numbers. Can you project that at all or is it going to remain static at about what it is now, do you think?

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - Through you, Mr Chairman, once again. Yes, I can respond to that. There have been a number of extrapolations, projections, based on previous visitor numbers. These vary in terms of what percentage you use as the rate. Previous studies by Hydro, and what-not, have used a higher rate than what we are currently using; we are currently using a 3 per cent which we find to be conservative but more realistic. The planning horizon that we are using is a 24-year period, and within the present numbers we have a doubling of numbers during that period.

Mr HALL - So a 3 per cent per annum natural increase is what you're -

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - Yes. I must also say that these are just projections; projections very rarely hold true to the future but they're the best way we can go about it. It's not forecasting because it's always variable. Who would have known about 11 September or the Ansett crash? They have immediate impacts but they're not impacts that stay around forever; it's always changing its dynamic but there will always be an upward growth. We have to plan using some number, and that is the percentage and the numbers that we are planning on at this stage.

Mrs NAPIER - Just following on that question, what year was the road upgraded to the entrance to the park and bitumened?

Mr NEVARD - 1991.

Mrs NAPIER - So that would still be before the 153 000?

CHAIR - I think we will move to the next witness, unless any members want to ask any more questions. Mr Nevard, you are giving evidence next, are you?

Mr NEVARD - Yes. Just to clarify my role in this, I have not been asked to look in any terms at all in relation to shuttle buses. My role has been merely in relation to the upgrading of the road in terms of its performance standard. I have mentioned in relation to tourism, mentioned in relation to wildlife, mentioned in relation to safety, although that is really covered properly by one of my colleagues, Leigh Barrett, who will be here by 2p.m. He is currently in Burnie. I rang him this morning and asked him to be

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

available. He is a highway engineer, so in terms of that particular issue he is probably best to ask. He is also probably best to ask in relation to vehicle capacity and the potential for future growth, if I am picking up some of your interest in the current design. So those are two areas I guess just to emphasise - vehicle capacity and growth being one of them, and safety being another one, which Leigh Barrett would be better able to answer. I can certainly convey to you some of my knowledge of the processes that have been through, but my qualifications don't lie in those areas. My principal qualifications lie in wildlife biology and tourism. In tourism I am intimately involved in a number of cases on a pretty global basis, actually. My role was essentially to interpret this document, that's why I asked for a copy of it, which is the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources project design brief which carries with it some discussion before you get to the principles which are held in this document, which I think you've already had a copy of, which is this submission document from DIER. Mr Todd has already been through the objectives and some of the general principles, and they are lifted in large part from that.

In addition to that design brief process, inevitably the words that are encapsulated in May 2001 - and I wasn't engaged, nor were Pitt and Sherry, to do the work until August. We attended inception meetings - and I have to say that we see our client, although our paymaster is DIER, our client has been very much Parks and Wildlife Service and DIER jointly, they have been at all meetings. We have taken instructions from both, and so consequently in developing what we have developed, it has been an iterative process. I have worked closely with Hank Schinkel and Roy Cordiner pretty intensively since August, and have got to know them quite well in that context, and have been here on a number of occasions, as indeed has my colleague.

Secondly, given my background in relation to wildlife biology and tourism, I have worked very closely with Leigh Barrett - Leigh Barrett being the engineer - who has told me what he can do and what he can't do in strict engineering terms. I have equally pressed him to be innovative and interesting where the boundaries of normal engineering practice wouldn't necessarily be typical. What we're doing here is something unusual; we are trying to create a situation which isn't straight out of a design manual. Those visitors that Allen Carman-Brown has referred to will have an experience in the years to come that is at least as high quality as that now, and which is not degraded by too many cars whizzing in too many directions in an uncoordinated and unhelpful way.

In that context, I am neither a supporter nor a critic of the shuttle bus, but what we have tried to do is come up with something which does have some capacity for growth and allows people to currently visit it, but also does not allow them to degrade the very place they are coming to visit. I think that is an important thing and, certainly from the point of view of Tourism Tasmania, that was a critical issue from their point of view. It is very easy to lose your reputation in tourism, very, very easy indeed. The collapse of September 11 will become institutionalised in some places if they don't look after the places that they're looking after.

So I do carry with me that strong view, but we have to continue to promote and create the Cradle Valley as one of Tasmania's premier tourism attractions. I also carry with me the view that it shouldn't spoil, so by encouraging visitation in a sustainable way and the road is a critical element in all of that.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

The reason for my involvement in the project is I have some experience of doing this. I am involved in a number of projects around the world, one in particular in North Queensland, it is quite comparable with a long access road which is a rustic nature road which is now suffering because of an increased number of vehicles along it and however, we don't want an increase in speed.

Mrs NAPIER - Is that Daintree?

Mr NEVARD - No, it's west of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area in a small town called Mareeba with an access to the wetlands.

I guess in all of that context, that's where I come from as a professional. I just wanted to qualify your knowledge of me and what I'm therefore able to answer fairly.

CHAIR - Yes, thank you.

Mr NEVARD - So moving on from that, on the visit to the site this morning I talked about adopting this single lane with passing bay approach - which is the instruction I've had from my client and one I endorse - no road widening beyond the limits of the existing road except for some passing bays and curb widening - which again I endorse. This is a World Heritage area and I want to emphasise that and say that the World Heritage Area Management Plan which brings the Commonwealth into play in all of these discussions, not this one today, I accept, but in the context of the overall approvals process, because this is in the World Heritage area and because it is a nominated project within the World Heritage area the Commonwealth view had to be sought, which we sought. Officers from the Commonwealth Environment Agency came over here - Environment Australia - went on a similar inspection to that that you have been on and asked us some very similar questions.

They were concerned about two things: one was environment protection and the second one was continued presentation of the World Heritage area, so they have similar concerns. The proposal that we have put to them has been approved by them in the sense that they do not wish to call it in, that's essentially how the approvals process works. They accept that it is a reasonable proposal and does not warrant their getting involved in it, so we have been through that first tier.

The second tier of the proposal that we have has been to both the Parks and Wildlife Service who, whilst they are our client in one sense, are also the gamekeeper in another in so far as they have an approvals process which the project must go through; it must be circulated with the Parks and Wildlife Service to the relevant officers for their comment and approval before it is accepted as a proposal.

Before we did that in a formal sense, we made it available to both DIER and the Parks and Wildlife Service for their comment before it went to them for formal submission, so it's been through a two stage robust process internally.

It's also been to the Environment Division of DPIWE with regard to pollution issues, noise issues, those sorts of things, because there is a separate approvals process that DPWIE have and it's passed through that process too with comment from them which we

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

amended before we presented our final proposal to Parks and Wildlife. So that is the sort of formal process we have been through.

With regard to the tenderers, the contractors who are tendering for the job should you approve it, as Mr Todd has said we have sent that out to them. In the tender document which I have here, which is in many ways a distillation of all of what I've said to you, it's been made very clear to the tenderers that they are dealing with a World Heritage area road and that they are dealing with wildlife protection and they have to be careful with people; it is a very careful contract, in other words.

So that thread of the environment and people first before the road is an engineering artefact has been led right the way through the design process and the design response, which is Leigh Barrett's province, properly is really to that. I have been part of setting those parameters of working with Leigh on the engineering, walking up and down the road with him with various measurement tools, understanding how the road works as a piece of engineering but understanding how it works as an ecological and visitation centre. So that is the background behind it.

Mrs NAPIER - Could I just ask one question? You've really been giving a background from whence you moved from the project design growth. It indicates in the project design route that the scope of the work is - I'm quoting from page 3: 'To provide for a single lane sealed road with passing bays between the visitor centre and Ronny Creek formalising existing passing areas, extending and widening them where necessary'. So am I to understand that at no stage was consideration given to any other design because DIER had required that it be a single lane sealed road?

Mr NEVARD - I certainly gave consideration and pressed for at the beginning of it, is it necessary to seal it? Something flows from this that is quite important, so it you'll bear with me a little bit on it, I think you've begun to pick it up with regard to gravelling et cetera. If you are going to surface the road you have to slow the vehicles down because if you don't slow the vehicles down there will be wildlife deaths on it. This particular section of road running from here out to the link literally became a blood smear, it was dreadful; it eliminated a globally threatened species of wildlife in the area, in a World Heritage area, it killed the whole population because they move between the park and here - which was eastern quolls - it reduced Tasmanian devils, it reduced spotted quolls et cetera to vast proportions below what they were before and so consequently the road has the potential to be a damaging thing if traffic speed goes up as a result of sealing.

CHAIR - What was the maximum speed limit on that section of road?

Mr NEVARD - I think it was 80 - it's not so much the limit, it's the speed at which people drive, the capacity of the road. I demonstrated on my way in here - I'm being slightly discursive but forgive me - three German hitch-hikers on my way in, I couldn't resist it, and my friends from DIER will probably swear at me for doing this, but I showed them how everybody in the tourist resorts goes through the chicanes, which is supposed to slow people down, which is the wrong way and you can do it at 80 and they all do.

Mrs NAPIER - Especially young drivers.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr NEVARD - Yes. So you have to design for human nature as much as the strict speed limit issues and that's, I guess, what I was concerned about, to be realistic about our behaviour rather than our adherence to the law.

CHAIR - So it was 80 and still is?

Mr NEVARD - I think it's 80 beyond there and I think -

Mr TODD - Sixty.

Mr NEVARD - it's 60 this side.

CHAIR - So from the turn-off up the road leading onto the Lyell Highway in here initially it's 80, is it?

Mr NEVARD - I think so.

CHAIR - That's what I thought. It's very difficult to compare road kill when the speed limit is 100.

Mr TODD - This end, I think it was always, sorry forgive me, I think it was always 60.

CHAIR - It's very difficult to compare when there's a speed limit of 100 and 40.

Mr TODD - That is absolutely true and that's why we're proposing the speed limits we are inside the park and that's why we're designing the road to accommodate - 60 kilometres an hour animals still get killed.

Mrs NAPIER - So 40 is your limit and below?

Mr NEVARD - Forty is really the limit. So just putting a 40 kph speed limit won't stop people; if the road is capable of being driven faster, they'll do it. No, I'll go further, we will do it, not just they.

CHAIR - So it seems to be the speed limit rather than single lane or double lane that cause the road kill.

Mr NEVARD - Not the speed limit, the design speed of the road.

CHAIR - If people are travelling at 100 on a two-lane highway and there was a lot of road kill out here initially it doesn't mean that that would happen if this road from here to Dove Lake were two lanes -

Mr NEVARD - No, this last section was 60 - and that's where the majority of the kill took place, because this is where the majority of the animals are.

Mrs NAPIER - In the 60 zone.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr NEVARD - Yes. Because inevitably the national park is the hub of most of the populations because it is least disturbed and those populations spread out from the national park into the surrounding areas.

CHAIR - So as you were saying, it doesn't matter what the limit is, it's the speed that motorists drive at. What is that understood to be during this period when there was so much road kill.

Mr NEVARD - I can't answer that because I don't know. I am relying on a very good zoologist's report - two of them - from Menna Jones, who is really the best marsupial carnivore expert I have come across. Her reports to DIER are quite clear: reduce the road speed to 40 and you will, not eliminate, but you will reduce the road kill massively. Allow people to drive faster and you won't. Really if one of the key values of this World Heritage area is the fact that all of the marsupial carnivores, apart from thylacines, are here and that nowhere else in Australia are they in the same sort of numbers, then you must protect that.

CHAIR - You are not suggesting that there are no thylacines here, are you?

Laughter.

Mr NEVARD - There are quite a number on the logos around the town. So, in essence, that was the starting point and I think that was quite an important one to get across: we are dealing with the World Heritage Area with a national park. A lot of the people who come here and certainly who will come here in the future will have a prima facie interest in that character - the wildlife road kill issue is therefore important.

Those who come here for the scenic reasons actually come here for much the same road configuration or would be happy with much the same road configuration - in other words, it is a narrow, winding, slow road. Those who want to dash in and out would be impaired by it. I can't deny that because it will be slower, it will be more regular, it will make sure people literally go at a reasonable pace rather than dash, so I can't in any way argue with that. I personally think though that they shouldn't and that we ought to be managing the park to allow its values to be maintained in a sustainable way. Having started this project with the benefit of Menna Jones' reports - I think one of them is in this document; the second one is post the work that has been done. I think I have a copy of it here on the shelf back there which I will put in for evidence, if you would like. It is my only copy but I am sure I can get another.

CHAIR - We have a fair amount of material on that in the submission.

Mr NEVARD - She talks about it before the traffic calming was done. She then did a report showing what had happened after the traffic calming was done.

Mrs NAPIER - We haven't got that in here?

Mr NEVARD - No, I don't think you have.

Mrs NAPIER - This one deals with that section up near the Waldheim.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

CHAIR - So you are welcome to submit that, if you wish.

Mr NEVARD - Yes, what she shows is that by traffic calming you can actually save the wildlife - in other words, she clearly shows the population after this was done had begun to re-establish itself. Not to its former levels but it had begun to, particularly at carnivores which are always the smallest number of animals and of course they scavenge on dead animals on the side of the road so they get knocked over themselves and therein lies the problem.

So really my job, as I saw it, was to try to bring together all of those environmental and economic development issues into something which was sustainable. That is how I saw what I was intending to do. Going through the issues with regard to road colour, road colour was important for wildlife protection reasons, important the other end for visual amenity and tourism reasons, so we changed the colour of the road at Waldheim. To address the surface and subsurface drainage issues, those issues of surface and subsurface drainage have been dealt with in the context of the detailed engineering design and weren't really my province. But they were important from the point of view of the potential for erosion from the existing culverts because there are a lot of culverts - in other words, there were probably as many culverts as you could push in the road without it just basically becoming a bridge of culverts, so I think they are probably sufficient and therefore any potential for water to erode is mitigated by the sheer number of them. In other words, they don't carry large amounts of water - most of them. In inspecting all of them, part of my initial brief was to come up with structures below every single culvert to effectively prevent any erosion and Allen, I know, was very concerned about that but the inspection showed that you don't need to do that to most of them - they're stable - some of them you do, but most of them you don't.

Signage - we wanted to minimise signage because the tourism people have made it quite plain that littering it with signage was not a good idea and to come up with speed humps and markings on the road, et cetera, would change it. The term I used to use was from the wilderness to Battery Point essentially and nobody wants this to look like Battery Point, I would submit. So, in doing that, Leigh Barrett progressed a process for coming up with a design which used the geometry, the shape of the road to reduce road speed essentially rather than signage and to formalise the existing situation where you have dangerous situations into something which works as a road adequately for the current and certainly for some growth.

Now, Peter Todd, if you wouldn't mind me passing something to him, might be able to explain to you within the department there is a safety auditing process for any design through which this had to pass before it was able to go to anybody and this design has been through that process which involves a statutory position that the person involved in auditing it has a statutory position, et cetera.

CHAIR - I'm pleased to hear that because I was going to ask whether any road safety authority had been consulted about this -

Mr NEVARD - Yes.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

CHAIR - because it occurred to me that it may be very confusing for motorists having two lanes, one lane, two lanes, one lane - they wouldn't know where they were and that it may be a danger factor there.

Mr NEVARD - And because of that, that's the process we went through.

Mr TODD - Mr Chairman, there are a series of audits that can be conducted on a road, beginning with the concept design right through to a number of stages, right through a final to what we call an existing road. So an audit can be done at any stage of a road, from its design right through. Part of the requirement for any of our new projects, our new designs, is that they actually go through that formal process. It is established by Austroads, it is a formal process that needs to be gone through and that is part of our design process. So that's what has occurred in this project.

CHAIR - So why is it not considered to be dangerous because on the face of it I would have thought that it was? People wouldn't quite know when it was going to be single and when it was going to be double and they may be drawing assumptions that involved danger.

Mr NEVARD - I think from a layman's point of view, because I am not an engineer, that my understanding of the design is that people will know. At the moment there is some confusion because the carriageways are varying widths and it is either one or three-quarters or one and three-quarters or two and three-quarters sometimes, sometimes it is very wide and therefore at the moment - the accident, from my understanding, without obviously not being involved in anything to do with it, was at least partly to do with the fact that it was in a very narrow section of road where it was not obvious that it was not two lanes and therefore the proximity of the two vehicles essentially caused one to put their wheel just over the edge of the carriageway and then the carriageway gave way. So what happened there was at least partly a function of confusion on the width of the road, so if you remove that confusion - that is, it is either single or it is double - then you essentially create a situation of some certainty out of uncertainty. That is the first point.

Mrs NAPIER - You're not going to have signs on the road, I presume, to say this is one lane, this is now two lanes, so you rely upon the perceived geometry of the road, hoping that people will realise that you should not have two cars on it. Isn't that the same risk, that two people in small cars will decide to give it a try anyway?

Mr NEVARD - They won't be able to; they won't be able to go past the entry point. Do you see what I mean? They physically won't be able to. So there will either be somebody on it, and it is very obvious that there is no width to get down there, because from a distance you can't judge that and that is the essential problem, or they will know it is two lanes and you can see that it is two lanes.

CHAIR - What about the risk of making a misassessment and one finishing up doing what that tourist bus did involving the multiple fatalities and it slips off the road? People are bound to make misjudgments.

Mrs NAPIER - You said there were no signs, therefore -

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr NEVARD - They won't be able to do that where the road narrowing occurs, not because there will be curbs, but firstly because it is a 40 kilometre per hour road environment so it is much slower, and I know the tourist bus slipped off at zero kilometres an hour, so all of those areas where there is a sheer edge down which something can roll have been eliminated. There are no areas, or there will be no areas like that. There are barriers, for example, being put in place. I did not discuss this. For example, on the Waldheim Road there is an increasing number of barriers to stop people from going off the road physically.

Mrs NAPIER - What about some of those areas, though, where you indicate it was going to go to one lane? I could imagine you might have a few that get a wheel up on the edge of the dirt.

Mr NEVARD - We would be using the natural configuration of the ground, and logs and rocks placed in that, so that effectively you had a naturalistic edge and you would not be able to do that. It is part of the contractor's contract which is going to be supervised very heavily, the placing of those natural features to effectively prevent somebody from doing that.

Mrs NAPIER - So in effect the road, where there aren't barriers, is going to have rocks and logs on the edges?

Mr NEVARD - Set in place in a reasonable way, not in sort of serried ranks by any stretch of the imagination; it would be inappropriate if it was done like that.

Mr KONS - Just to repeat what you said, in all the areas that are dangerous, like where the bus went over et cetera, any risk there will be alleviated with barriers and all those sorts of things, and it is only a small section of the road that has that potential to ... and those areas will be highlighted with signs?

Mr NEVARD - They will be highlighted appropriately, but whether it is a mixture of signage or road marking or barriers or whatever, they will be dealt with in that way. The safety issue is one which is in people's minds very strongly because of the tragedy that has occurred. This time it was very high in the minds of the road designers, because Pitt and Sherry was actually the engineer charged with coming up with the redesign work that has already happened after that tragedy, and indeed appeared at the coronial inquiry in that context. So the firm is very conscious of that.

Mrs NAPIER - Where else in Tasmania or Australia has this system being used to try to achieve some other purpose?

Mr NEVARD - I don't think there is a comparable area actually, so in Tasmania it is a difficult question to ask. In the project in which I am involved in North Queensland, the Mareeba Wetlands, it is certainly used subsequent to here -

Mrs NAPIER - It hasn't been used yet, but is being considered.

Mr NEVARD - No, we are literally starting construction after the wet season. The wet season ends in North Queensland in March.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mrs NAPIER - And following on this same issue, could I ask Mr Todd, when it was decided to have a single lane sealed road with passing bays as a form, was it a key factor that it was inevitable that shuttle bus services would be used?

Mr TODD - It was understood that that had been in the planning, but the upgrade that is proposed is not contingent on there necessarily being a bus or shuttle bus operating. It is in one sense a stand-alone solution to the issues that are there now, but it is cognisant that that may be something that comes out of the planning in the future. So it's not totally dependent, as I read it.

Mrs NAPIER - What usage growth projections were used as to how long it is thought this would be able to continue to be safe when used by cars?

Mr TODD - I don't have those figures with me. When Mr Barrett arrives I believe he will be able to provide that information.

Mrs NAPIER - I was going to ask whether we could have a copy of the safety audit report that has been done on the design of the road at some stage, as to whoever might be able to provide that.

Mr TODD - We can arrange for that to be supplied.

Mr HARRISS - Just to follow on from that, Mr Chairman, Mrs Napier has raised a very important component of the whole process, as I see it, and the question is, is there is a nexus between road safety as an issue and vehicle capacity?

CHAIR - Do you mean engine capacity?

Mr HARRISS - No, vehicle numbers on the road.

Mr NEVARD - If vehicle numbers continue to rise, will there be a diminution in road safety?

Mr HARRISS - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - Particularly at peak times.

Mr NEVARD - I don't think there will, and the reason I don't think there will is because you've got a design limit of 40 kilometres an hour.

Mr HARRISS - And then earlier, Mr Nevard, you made the comment that included in your design is a capacity for some increase in traffic volumes.

Mr NEVARD - I believe that is what Leigh has done but, as I said, that is a question for him.

Mrs NAPIER - And, related to that, what is the holding capacity of the passing bays?

Mr NEVARD - Sometimes they are three vehicle, sometimes two vehicle, sometimes they are one vehicle. They vary.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mrs NAPIER - And how was that determined, given whatever analyses might have been made of peak demand?

Mr NEVARD - I don't think the science got that complicated; I think it was based on what is there on the ground at the moment and what can be worked with. I am pretty sure there was no modelling in a computer sense done of stacking, of length of bays. What was done was: what is the maximum that we can put in place? In other words, what is there is the maximum. We have gone for the maximum amount of passing bays. Wherever there was a choice to put one in, there is one.

Mr HARRISS - Mr Todd made the comment, or answered one of Mrs Napier's questions, with regard the shuttle bus service and the fact that it stands alone from the design of the road. So let us get on the record clearly the department's or the government's - somebody's - desire to introduce a shuttle service regardless. Is that not a fact? Is it not a fact that somewhere in this planning process there is a black and white desire to introduce a shuttle bus service? Is that a fact or not?

Mr TODD - It is in there.

Mr HARRISS - Yes, I've read that document, but that document is not a part of any evidence to this committee.

Mr CORDINER - Through you, Mr Chairman - perhaps we could table that document.

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - Mr Chairman, I have brought 10 copies of the zone plan - full title Pencil Pine-Cradle Valley Visitor Services Zone Plan, January 2002. It is in draft form and currently out for public comment till the end of February, and is actually a review of the zone plan that was introduced 10 years ago, which introduced -

CHAIR - We already have a copy of that.

Mrs NAPIER - But it's good to have one officially tabled.

CHAIR - Certainly. If you'd like to do that now we'll take that into evidence. Thank you.

Mr CORDINER - Mr Chairman, just to finish the answer to that question, section 3.2 of that document has the planning strategy for the future introduction of a shuttle bus clearly set out, and that is the current state, as we understand it, of the planning intention.

Mr KONS - Just a further question to elaborate on what Mr Harriss was saying. The design you've been working on for this road is based on a presupposition of about a 3 per cent increase in tourist numbers coming in, without any consideration that it's only going to be for a few years. You've been guided by an increase in numbers, not necessarily by a shuttle bus service.

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - It's safe to say it's by the ever-increasing numbers that are coming to the park - it's a trend that is validated. While the ultimate numbers may vary in the future, it is increasing now and there's no reason to suspect that it would not continue to increase.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr KONS - That was the principal guide of the recommendations for this road?

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - Yes. The bus shuttle system is a planning intention; it has not evolved to the stage of reality yet.

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT

Mr LEIGH BARRETT, ENGINEER, PITT & SHERRY, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION, AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR - I think Mr Harriss was wanting to continue with the point he raised before the luncheon adjournment.

Mr HARRISS - Mr Chairman, we understand Mr Barrett probably has the capacity to answer my question which related to the link between road safety and vehicle volumes. The question was: is there in fact a link between the two, and specifically with a road like this, and what sort of impact does vehicle volumes have on the safety aspect for a road such as this one?

Mr BARRETT - That's a complex question. Yes, there is a link between volumes and accident statistics. Generally, as volumes of traffic on the road increases the likelihood of accidents increases as well. I'm not quite sure how your question relates to this particular piece of road, though.

Mr HARRISS - Well, some of the evidence we heard earlier in the day revolved around the fact that part of the process under consideration is the introduction of a shuttle bus service. We have been told by your colleague that your brief has been in fact to design a road for use by passenger vehicles and that the use of a shuttle bus has no impact on that and so we started to investigate - or I did, at least - the link between road safety and vehicle volumes. I was then going to lead on to a question which probably comes back to Mr Todd. Are we not in this process putting the cart before the horse because we are building a road which, if we get to where the draft visitor services plan suggests, we won't have passenger vehicles on the road. Would we then design a different road if it was only going to be used for shuttle buses?

Mr BARRETT - I'm not sure. I don't know if we would design it differently. From the point of view of asking if the road is being designed so that it would force the introduction of shuttle buses, there is no intention of that in the design. I believe the design merely formalises the existing arrangements on the road, the fact that it is substantially a one-way inroad with passing bays at present - we're merely formalising that arrangement. In fact we're probably improving the safety by the fact that we're formalising the locations of the ends of the passing bays at the start of the one-way intersections so that people know where to stop to give way to other vehicles.

CHAIR - It's not really just formalising, because it's being changed. In some places where it's two lanes now it's been narrowed to one lane and that's happening repeatedly - it's not merely a matter of formalising it. The point of Mr Harriss' question is - I think you've

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

missed it - that it is being designed now and it is becoming more apparent to us, I think, the more we hear that in anticipation of a shuttle bus service being introduced and a prohibition on private vehicles, except for those who have an exemption. What Mr Harriss was asking you was, if that weren't the case and if there were no suggestions about a shuttle bus service, would it be designed the way it is?

Mr BARRETT - Yes, there will be no change to the design we have it now.

Mr HARRISS - Through you, Mr Chairman, the flip side is that if it is only going to be used by shuttle buses, would you walk down a different path of design? The geometry of the road which we saw this morning on the tour and the passing bays and the two lanes portions of the road et cetera, I would have thought that if it's only going to be used by shuttle buses and those vehicles would have two-way radios, there are all sorts of differences you'd make to the road than what's being proposed. Is that a fair assessment?

Mr BARRETT - I believe that if it was going to go to a shuttle bus service right now we probably would change the design, yes.

Mr HARRISS - Then I come back, Mr Chairman, to the comment I made a little earlier that we're putting the cart before the horse. We have a proposal before this committee for the expenditure of substantial funds. This committee is considering a road design and construction to cater for passenger vehicles and yet if all the things in the draft plan are implemented, including particularly the shuttle bus service, then we will have constructed a road which we didn't need to construct specifically for that service. Therein, to me, Mr Chairman, is a problem because there is a draft plan floating around. We have a pending coroner's report which has not yet seen the light of day, and the coroner, after having considered the tragedy which occurred here, may well make very sweeping and wide-ranging recommendations as to not only the construction in terms of safety for the road, but for the type of vehicles which ought to be on that road. For instance, if the coroner came out and said buses ought not ever use that road again.

CHAIR - In addition, you have a draft visitor service zone plan still open for public discussion, that's the third uncertainty.

Mr HARRISS - Yes. Can I then, Mr Chairman, in closing - and this is more of a statement, I guess, but I would like a response to it because I think there are some answers which I the committee should get to this - on page 43 of the draft plan, it makes it quite clear in the last point that there is very limited information on visitor opinions at Cradle Mountain. That being the case, if we're talking about taking into account the needs of the visitors to this place, the very document which is proposing changes acknowledges that we don't have much visitor information. We are making the decisions for the visitors without having necessarily consulted them, and the chairman has referred to those kinds of things earlier. So I would like some response from whomever as to some more detail about the design of this road if it was only going to be a shuttle bus road, and what vehicle volumes could it be said, in an engineering sense, the road is currently capable of carrying and will be capable of carrying with the new design?

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - Mr Chairman, may I respond initially? I'd like to present the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area Management Plan which is a statutory document, unlike the zone plan which is non-statutory in nature. It is a strategic process.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

This management plan has been approved by both the current Government and the Commonwealth. In there, there are a number of objectives and a number of prescriptions; there are prescriptions that relate to the road specifically.

Mr NEVARD - The prescriptions start on page 159 and, insofar as they relate to Cradle Mountain, they go over onto page 160.

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - In there, if you consider that the management prescriptions are undertakings that Parks and Wildlife have to undertake. There's no time line, but those are things that we need and have to undertake until such time as the management plan itself has been reviewed and changed in any way. This is the process and the direction that we are heading down.

If I can just have a moment to find the exact management prescriptions, on page 160, design, construct site and maintain all service signs: 'Retain the Cradle Mountain Road from visitors centres to Cradle Valley car park as a narrow, winding, tree-lined road to protect the character of the park. Undertake minor upgrading of the road from Pencil Pine to Waldheim turnoff in Cradle Valley. Maintain the final section of the Dove Lake road from Waldheim turnoff to Lake Dove to a similar standard to that existing. Mute the road surface to reduce visual impact from day walk area. The road may be sealed to reduce environmental damage to the roadside vegetation'.

CHAIR - Is that what you're aiming to do?

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - Yes.

CHAIR - That's referred to on page 3 of your submission, and if I could just draw attention to the part that reads 'maintain the final section of the Dove Lake road from Waldheim turnoff to Lake Dove to a similar standard to that existing'. We were told this morning on the inspection that that's going to be changed from the standard that exists now, to a two lane-one lane road. You're not maintaining it to that standard.

Mr NAVARD - I think that's because there's a discontinuity between the two of them.

CHAIR - Maybe, but -

Mr NAVARD - I agree with you, the wording shows otherwise.

CHAIR - What you've just quoted there, Mr Carman-Brown, is on page 3 of the submission. It is given some emphasis in the submission, you've given it some emphasis now, and yet in one important part of it you're departing from it.

Mr NAVARD - There's a contradiction in the two paragraphs, I think that's the problem. First says, 'Retain the Cradle Mountain Road' - it's not two paragraphs, it's two sentences - 'from visitor centre to Cradle Valley car park as a narrow, winding, tree-lined road to protect the character of the park'. So it says that the whole road has to be a narrow, winding road - the whole road. It then goes on to say, 'Undertake minor upgrading of the road from Pencil Pine to Cradle' - in other words, it's slack, unfortunately, and it's something I picked up basically right at the beginning, and said the

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

brief doesn't appear to be consistent, exactly as you have, Sir. The brief doesn't appear to be consistent with the requirement in the management plan. How do we interpret that?

CHAIR - Where's the Cradle Valley car park? Is it not the one just south of the Waldheim junction?

Mr NAVARD - It's the Ronny Creek car park.

CHAIR - That's right. The rest of that, there must be one or two kilometres beyond that. This World Heritage Area Management Plan 1999 is saying for the rest of that 'maintain it to a similar standard as that existing'. What you are putting to us is a totally different standard, a reduced standard.

Mr NAVARD - It's not reduced, it is different, and I do accept that it is different from what is said there. The reason for that is that you would basically end up having a narrow, winding road where people do 40 kilometres an hour coming onto a road where, if you leave it as a similar standard, they can do 100 kilometres.

CHAIR - For good reason. It doesn't have to be 100, but there is, as you pointed out on the bus tour this morning, a very big difference because there's very little wildlife in that latter section.

Mr NAVARD - No, I didn't say very little, I said less -

CHAIR - Well, less.

Mr NAVARD - and that is a very important issue -

CHAIR - I am not suggesting -

Mr NAVARD - because 'very little' would infer that there is very little, but 'less' is less than in an area which, in terms of its large mammal fauna, is amongst the most biodiverse in Australia.

CHAIR - But those advocating this project can hardly rely upon a passage from the World Heritage Management Plan. In the submission, one of the first points made - and Mr Carman-Brown, in response to the questioning of Mr Harriss, relied on it independently of that when it's inconsistent with what's being proposed in a significant way and I don't think the proponents of this project can have it both ways.

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - Once again, Mr Chairman, in response - the management plan that we're talking about has other prescriptions as more general objectives and one of them of course is quite important and that is maintaining the values of a World Heritage area, number one being the integrity of the natural environment which one would have to admit that is with the visitor pressure and people going along the dusty roads at the moment is having an adverse effect and therefore we need to respond to that as well.

CHAIR - Yes, a different point.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr CORDINER - Just as a minor point, Mr Chairman, but I thought I would just point to the visitors services zone plan draft again. The idea was actually not to exclude passenger vehicles permanently from the park and the Lynch report proposed that during the hours of nine in the morning and five in the afternoon in summer and ten and four in other months people would be able to bring their cars into the park; so it wasn't a complete exclusion. It also went on to suggest that public vehicles, people in the accommodation houses, disabled visitors would be able to bring their vehicles into the park. It was a scenario to what he is proposing is the perspectives. I thought it was just important to introduce the fact that it is not a complete exclusion of passenger vehicles and I think there's further development work needed on that obviously. That was the last report done and so it has to be taken further. It's a minor point of correction but I thought I'd make it.

CHAIR - On the scale indicating the times and numbers or percentage of vehicles, there's a minor number outside those hours, isn't there?

Mr CORDINER - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - It was indicated that there hadn't been any modelling done of the extent to which you have a back-up of cars in the passing bays. I was thinking of high time summer maximum tourist visitation, be it local or interstate - what is your view about what the likelihood is that there'd be excessive back-up in the passing lanes before entering on the single lanes?

Mr BARRETT - I don't have the numbers to do any modelling for peak seasons but my opinion, based on existing conditions, is that the backing-up wouldn't be of significance. I say that because all we're planning to do to the road the design is not substantially different to what's on the road at the present. Where there are one-lane sections of road at the present and people do have to stop to give way and it has not led to a serious back-up of traffic.

Mrs NAPIER - I ask the question because I can understand that where it's not possible or wouldn't appear to be possible to increase the size of the lane from one-and-a-half to two but it seemed to me that there were quite a number of areas where what is currently two-lane traffic is going to be reduced to one in part to reduce speed traffic and from that point of view we're increasing the number of passing bays that would be used, we're increasing the number of sections that would be single lane and I would have thought, as an aspect of safety and traffic flow, we'd need to do some kind of estimation of the number of cars per meterage of the road, I suppose, or length of the road.

Mr BARRETT - We haven't done any calculations on that. The idea of putting in the single lane sections where there is a substantial length of two lane at present is more to keep traffic flowing at a constant speed by having the longer sections of two lane at present. People tend to speed up or exceed the speed length, whereas if we're able to keep a more constant or even spread of single lane sections it'll keep the traffic speeds at a more even rate.

Mr GREEN - The chicanes here aren't an effective way of controlling speed? Why can't we maintain the dual lanes, as Mrs Napier says, but have the chicane-type arrangements, even though I know you said you can go through them at 40 kilometres -

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr NAVARD - Eighty.

Mr GREEN - or 80 kilometres, that they would be designed in such a way that you minimise that opportunity as well so that we're keeping the integrity of the road as it stands at the moment - that is, to allow for passing lanes on those longer sections but reduce the speed of the drivers in another way? It seems to me there's nothing to stop a person speeding on a single lane if they feel as though they've got clear traffic, especially at night when you're talking about road kills, when they're likely to be able to see lights coming the other way. So it seems to me to minimise the traffic in another way to allow for daytime - minimise the speed, I should say, during the daylight hours when the volumes of vehicles are, I would assume, at their greatest would be a more effective way of coping with the issue of road kills and doing away with the ability to be able to pass on those sections. It seems to me, and this is just anecdotal from my point of view, it says 350 vehicles maximum - I understand it's actually more than that, the volumes of traffic on the road right today - would suggest to me that there is a great likelihood of banking more than just one or two vehicles or three vehicles provided for in the plan.

Mr SCHINKEL - Mr Chairman, if I can just pass on some information. I was just talking to one of my colleagues during the break and yesterday he had A five vehicle back-up and two-vehicles behind them and there's a lot of shuffling in the passing bays at the moment trying to get through. These passing bays are only going to be two or three so I guess there could be some more problems.

Mr NEVARD - I guess that you have two approaches, three approaches that I can distil down and that's basically where I started from in relation to the work that we've been doing: one is you do nothing and if you do nothing the downside of doing nothing essentially relates to dust and damage to the vegetation, which the botanists and the World Heritage Management Plan are concerned about. The next is to do something which slows down the vehicles to a consistent rate, which also removes the problem of gravel wash, et cetera. In that context you have two alternatives: one that uses signs and one that doesn't. What we've tried to do is come up with a scheme that doesn't use signs. If you put essentially urban traffic calming measures, which is what they are, into the World Heritage area then you change its character and that's fine if that's what you decide to do. I understand why, but you have to accept that you will change the character of the road if you do that. So to do that it was a route which we could have gone down - we could have gone down that road and done exactly the sort of things that we see here because they are partially effective. They are not wholly effective but they do work. They don't work that effectively because they're not close enough together if you have them close because everybody speeds up between them but if they are closer together - but in order to put that sort of measure in the road the road safety people inside DIER have made it quite plain that if you put those sorts of measures into the road rather than using the road geometry you have to put signage, you have to put warning signs -

Mr GREEN - You can't give an indication that the road ahead contains -

Mr NEVARD - No, it's not exceptional -

Mr GREEN - You can't say three kilometres of bendy road?

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr NEVARD - because you are putting barriers in the road. We can do that if we do it the way we are proposing but we can't do it otherwise. This way requires us to put in signage, it requires us to put in warning signage and we all know how much signage there is in relation to each of those barriers at the moment and the tourism industry has said quite categorically that they didn't want to see that happen again. They don't want to see that type of character carried on inside the park. So if we are to avoid that or if we are to implement that then you can try to do it in the best possible taste but at the end of the day you won't be able to remove that option and that is an option for you. You can keep it as two lanes with chicanes, those sort of little - I call them Battery Point because I am sort of probably a bit bigoted about it but nonetheless, it comes an urban solution. What we have tried to do is to come up with a solution which we would be quite proud of as designers which will be looked at, I believe, as being best practice around the world rather than urbanising what is essentially as the wilderness World Heritage area says, a wilderness environment. So what we tried to do is do something which is wilderness.

If the committee decides not to make the expenditure on the basis of putting a shuttle bus in place - if the shuttle bus is the solution, in other words, to what is essentially becoming a problem - then you can, as Leigh has said, seal the road and you can travel along it slowly and you can not have signs because basically you have got to control that environment. You don't need humps and bumps, you can get away with sealing a much narrower section of the road - all that is achievable - but if you want to maintain it open for people and you want to ... then there will be wildlife deaths, very significant wildlife deaths on the road unless you put in place the sort of traffic calming we have outside the park. If we do that we have got to put signage in place.

Mr HALL - Do they necessarily have to be the chicanes or can you have speed humps?

Mr NEVARD - Best done in signs.

Mr HALL - Yes.

Mr NEVARD - And so to keep 40 kilometres you need them regularly. The problem with speed humps regularly is snow ploughs. If you have lots of speed humps, snow ploughs will catch on them, you will have a big problem with snow ploughing so speed humps and snow ploughing don't go together very well. That's one of the problems.

In relation to road maintenance that's an issue but the lowest, and in fact I started to say this at the beginning of my evidence to you, was I certainly put it to my clients that they consider not sealing the road because by not doing that you maintain a low speed environment, you maintain the character of the road as it is but you sacrifice the vegetation. But that's really all you sacrifice, apart from some views from Cradle Valley of the long road, which I still think is the wrong road. I have to say that quite firmly; I still believe it is the wrong type of road for that environment. It is a fast, speedy road. I think something needs to be done about that but that caveat aside, that is an option you have.

The second option you have is to basically replicate this type of treatment outside here with perhaps the chicanes closer together to make sure people only do 40 kph or you do the sort of thing that Leigh has come up with. If you start to fiddle or compromise what he has come up with in any substantial way you start to create a high-speed environment

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

between the spaces and you then have to start thinking about signage because it's going faster and you are very quickly down that road and you have lost the advantages of the design as it now stands. So that's the process that we have been through. We have been through a process of do nothing - I have anyway - I have been through a process of do nothing. My clients were quite clear that they wanted it sealed, DIER because it offers significant road maintenance benefits to them and Parks and Wildlife because it offers significant environmental benefits to them so that's where they started off with sealing it.

Then there were two roads you could have gone down - and I know I am repeating myself but I think it is important that I make it - because essentially where we have come from you go down the road that's outside here or you go down something which is rather more innovative and interesting which takes a bit of grasping but I think Leigh, as an engineer - and I have had no input into the lengths of the passing bays or anything like that at all, that is essentially an engineering decision - but I think he has produced a design which achieves that slower speed environment which is what our brief requires us to do -

Mr GREEN - With all due respect, I think you are missing two points: one is track management and the other is safety.

Mr NEVARD - No, because the speed environment we have talked about achieves the safety issue.

Mr GREEN - For the animals?

Mr NEVARD - And people. It has been through DIER's internal safety audit for people; it does it for both. Putting in a low speed environment with traffic humps achieves it for both too but it comes at a price in terms of visual impact and change of character. I haven't missed that point, I do not think, but there may be others that I have missed but that's quite a strong one. We have set out to marry safety for people and wildlife, and visual amenity - the three, together and you get a disjunct if you go down another route.

You would probably, I think it is fair to say, end up having a longer term-capacity. I heard today - and I haven't really grasped this figure before - but in 24 years at 3 per cent you double the number of people visiting the park. That doesn't necessarily mean you double the number of vehicles of course because with the mix of internationals, interstate and locals the algorithm won't work that way because most of the internationals will arrive here - not the interstates but the internationals - in buses and go into the park in buses and that's increasing whereas the other two are falling away to a certain extent so that pattern is changing any way.

I think I heard somebody say when we were up in the park today that they wouldn't visit the park with friends necessarily if they couldn't get out to the end. I have to say that I probably would not particularly want to but if it was the only way I could, I would. I was born and brought up in Africa and as a child I used to drive down on to the floor of the Serengeti in my dad's land rover - you can't do that any more; you have to go down in a controlled vehicle.

In five years time the Grand Canyon will be accessed only by a shuttle bus because of the problems you end up with having everybody having free access, is that the

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

experience that Wiendorfer had, we don't have now, and in 20 years time the people coming in won't even have the experience we have. So you reach a point of carrying capacity, which is what Allen Carman-Brown was talking about, which I think we are getting close to. Hank was alluding to that with the numbers of cars parked in the car park this time, so I think you have got to do something. You do have those three alternatives: do nothing and think more about the shuttle bus; go down the road that we proposed and minimise signage or go down the road with a more - I know I'm being pejorative, I'm trying not to be - a more urbanised type of traffic calming which will work epilogically, you can make it work epilogically but in visual terms I think it would reduce the quality of experience massively personally. So that's really where I've come from, I've tried to come up with marrying all of those elements.

CHAIR - Mr Cordiner, you wanted to make a point.

Mr CORDINER - I think Tim's clarified it, it was really the sort of regulatory side effect. DIER, the requirement is set by codes of practice and the scrutiny if it's done separately as a statutory function inside the department. The mixed response doesn't seem to be possible, it's either one thing or the other. I think Mrs Napier alluded to that too, that when you start there's an information board saying, 'This is how this road works' and thereafter it works like that without further signage or the other way is, there is no indication of that, it is signed all the way and treated that way.

Mr SCHINKEL - My colleague has just done a sum: at 150-metre spacing of speed bumps, that's 50 speed bumps between here and Dove Lake. Again, I don't believe that's a practical solution because the snow ploughs literally will get hooked up on most of them as they go. You can ask Hank as the practical person here in that context, but I would like to hear what he has to say about it. But 50 speed bumps, all of them with signage.

Mrs NAPIER - Can I ask a response from Hank about the practicality of that?

Mr SCHINKEL - At the moment CCC do all the snow clearing here and I can see they're going to be fairly frustrated trying to negotiate each of those speed bumps and the time taken to snow clear the road will be considerable increased. John may be able to further back what I've said.

Mr FENECH - Yes, Mr Chairman, with DIER, the maintenance crew have always argued against the use of speed humps for the snow-clearing operating or its effect on the snow clearing operation. But I might say the chicanes are not all that easy to negotiate as well. They are a bit of a nightmare, so either option is difficult to manage under a snow-clearing operation, I can't really say much more than that.

Mr SCHINKEL - The frequency on snow falls that we get here seems to be on the downward slide with climate change and whatever.

CHAIR - The gentleman sitting in the public reserve would like to make a comment. Would you mind coming forward and take the oath?

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

EDDIE FIRTH, PARK RANGER, PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

Mr FIRTH - Just briefly, you're talking about 50 speed humps, well looking at the plan that is submitted from this committee I count 67 single lane pull-over areas in that road as it stands now as presented. So if you're talking about 50 speed humps, 50 speed humps compared to 67 single-lane sections of road as is proposed at the moment.

The second point I'd like to make is before I started with Parks and Wildlife I was a member of the Cradle Mountain Advisory Committee which is a pre-runner to the Friends of Cradle Valley. Many times in the life of my attendance to that committee the road issue has been discussed over many years. There has been all manner of suggestions put forward and one that was put forward a lot of times was actually putting spoon drains into the road surface like a dip so that it easily could be snow ploughed, it would act as a drainage channel. That sort of information, I don't think, has come through into the road design; it's certainly a practical solution to speed humps.

CHAIR - So you'd consider anything under 67 of those would be an improvement?

Mr FIRTH - Yes, visually and also for safety. I just wanted to point that out.

CHAIR - So in view of the fact you served on that committee, do you have any views about the width of the road, whether it should be two lanes or one, say, if it had spoon drains?

Mr FIRTH - My main view would be safety and the more single lane sections of road there are then obviously the safety is compromised.

CHAIR - So you would favour fewer single lane sections?

Mr FIRTH - Yes.

CHAIR - And spoon drains, for example, for traffic management to slow vehicles down?

Mr FIRTH - Yes, that's only an example.

CHAIR - Do you mind if I ask what your duties are at the moment?

Mr FIRTH - I'm employed as a ranger at Cradle Mountain.

CHAIR - And you're obviously based here?

Mr FIRTH - Yes, I'm based at Cradle Mountain.

CHAIR - How long have you been with the department?

Mr FIRTH - Eight years.

CHAIR - And for how long have you been a regular visitor or involved with Cradle Mountain?

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr FIRTH - Since the early 1960s.

CHAIR - So you've had a lot of experience?

Mr FIRTH - Yes.

CHAIR - Anything else you would like to say at this stage? You'll have another opportunity later.

Mr FIRTH - I have a couple of things to say. One of the things, while we're talking about the road, the main reason I'm here today is my concern about safety. I believe the road as proposed isn't safe. We've heard from Mr Nevard earlier on about the people who are coming in for a look, he's admitted that they will speed and he has admitted that there's nothing that they can do about that, so with 67 single lane areas of road where they have to actually give way to people I feel that the events that happened early last year in February in the road accident the staff here will be the first people that will be called upon to give assistance to the public, which is the nature of our duties. I feel it's very unfair to put the staff in a situation where we're going to have to revisit, possibly, situations that we have had to deal with in the last 12 months. That's why quite a few of us are concerned about what's being proposed. I'm not saying we've got answers but we're concerned.

Mr SCHINKEL - Mr Chairman, I would like to say that most of the staff here were present at the accident; we were all called up and since then it's been very much a concern of the staff here of attending another accident like that. It's weighed heavy on a lot of us and we are very concerned. Safety is very much paramount in the minds of all the staff who are working here.

Mr FIRTH - Just another point while I'm here, listening to what's been said a minute ago about this road modelling and the road as currently designed passing through DIER's safety audit, I just make the point: how can that pass through their audit system if no modelling is being done as to how much traffic the road can carry and if they don't know, because the traffic counter has only just gone in in December, all this information that they're basing all their work on the road from is all the stuff from two years ago which was done one way over Easter? The figures for what they're actually using are not current, they haven't got a full set of data, they don't know how many cars go in and out per hour, so how can the road have a safety audit done on it if they haven't actually done any modelling to see what the road can carry, and what the story is if all the passing bays are full?

CHAIR - So the numbers are not based on an annual average, but on one day?

Mr FIRTH - Well, the information that we are told is that there was only a data logger ever put on the road for one day and that was at Easter two years ago.

CHAIR - Really.

Mr FIRTH - And the data logger has only just gone on the road in December this year for our planning purposes. The submission that's being presented to this committee puts a

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

maximum of 390 cars per day on the road, whereas actually last week or the week before it was 550. So you've sort of been given some wrong information to start with as well.

Mr TODD - Mr Chairman, I would point out that the figure of 380 or 390 is the average annual daily traffic, which is not what would be a peak figure. It does recognise that there would be.

Mr KONS - What figures is that based on?

Mr TODD - I would have to get the details of that, but we would use what we call an annual average daily traffic figure. I think there was some data collected that Leigh may be able to speak about. I just want to point out there is a difference between a peak value and average annual daily traffic volume.

Mr FIRTH - All I am saying to this committee is that they should be looking at the data for a whole summer period of what actually happens on the road, not based on what happens in April.

CHAIR - And to your knowledge the traffic count was conducted only on one day in Easter 2000, was it?

Mr SCHINKEL - Excuse me, Mr Chairman, I think it was a period of a week or two weeks, but I may be corrected by Leigh who has the figures.

Mr FIRTH - I am just saying they should have the full data for a summer period, anyway, so I just think it is a bit flawed in a few areas.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr FIRTH - Anyway, I just wanted to point out about that 67 versus -

CHAIR - Yes, while you are there, while we are talking about this and the single lane, one matter that has concerned me - and I know from discussions over lunch I am not the only one concerned about this - is that vehicles in the two-lane section coming to a single lane section with a vehicle on the other side may be inclined to race to try to get there first, as we see happening on highways in Tasmania and other places where there are passing lanes, vehicles speeding up to try to get out of it first in front of other ones and causing danger. Do you see that as a problem?

Mr FIRTH - Very much so, because we have had an admission here this morning by Mr Nevard that people do speed in and out of there and, if they are faced with having to go through 67 single lane sections of road and they are in a hurry, then obviously there is an element of danger there.

CHAIR - And you feel that they would see the opportunity to get past a single lane section before an approaching vehicle as a similar type of challenge to the one that Mr Nevard talked about of getting through the chicanes at 80?

Mr FIRTH - Yes.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

CHAIR - I share that concern very strongly.

Mr HARRISS - Mr Chairman, I was going to come back to a question I asked earlier to which I did not get an answer, and it has been raised by Mr Firth in his contribution, and that is: for what vehicle volumes has this proposal been designed for? We have figures in front of us indicating the average annual daily traffic and so on over the various periods, and Mr Firth has raised his concern about the safety aspects, given the fact that there can hardly be a safety audit if we don't accurately know. So I would like to know just what the vehicle volume design of this proposal is.

Mr BARRETT - The basis of the design is on the current traffic volumes, based on the traffic counts from April 2001, and those traffic counts were taken over a full one week period, contrary to previous suggestions - a full week.

CHAIR - One week?

Mr BARRETT - One week.

CHAIR - Out of 52?

Mr BARRETT - Yes.

CHAIR - It is not much improvement on one day.

Mrs NAPIER - What time of the year was that done?

Mr BARRETT - It was April, an Easter period. It went from 1200 hours on Wednesday 4 April 2001.

Mrs NAPIER - And what was the peak volume for a day?

Mr BARRETT - It was south of Soldiers Creek Bridge, it was based on one sample week only and not seasonally adjusted. Average daily traffic for the month is 387 vehicles per day.

Mrs NAPIER - And what range is there, high to low? I guess that is what I meant by peak. What was the highest number of vehicles on any particular day.

Mr BARRETT - It's not given.

Mrs NAPIER - Do you have a range figure there or standard deviation or something for which it has been calculated?

Mr BARRETT - There is no standard deviation given.

Mrs NAPIER - Is that available at all?

Mr SCHINKEL - We can provide that data.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mrs NAPIER - The committee would certainly appreciate an indication of what the peak figure is that has been assessed and how often that peak is likely to arise within, say, a week over which it has been measured. We could all handle the low times. It is the peak times. Ask any energy generator if you get a black-out.

Mr SCHINKEL - Mr Chairman, further to that data we have a data logger recently gone in just before Christmas which we are now sending to our statistics department in our head office and also Roads, I think it is, so if more information is required -

Mrs NAPIER - That would be very helpful.

CHAIR - Mr Harriss has made the point - validly, I think - of the cart being before the horse. I mean, here comes either the cart or the horse, following the other one, because these figures haven't been available in any assessments that have been done upon which this submission is based. We keep getting all these loose ends.

Mr SCHINKEL - Prior to the data logger we had a road counter in for some time which only counts a daily figure, which is read at about 8 a.m. each day.

Mr CORDINER - You just mentioned that there was a figure taken every day. Could I just ask, Mr Chairman, for how long the daily count has been going on?

DENNIS STODDART WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

Mr STODDART - I have records over there that go back four or five years, but they would go back longer than that.

Mr SCHINKEL - Dennis is our stats collector.

Mrs NAPIER - Ah, he's the man we need to talk to.

CHAIR - Mr Firth, you can come back later on if there are other points you would like to raise.

Mr CORDINER - I just think there was an impression being developed that there was only data logging happening last Easter and then from this December onwards. It was my understanding data logging is a habit of DIER through all the roads throughout Tasmania, including this one, and Dennis has just given us the figures.

Mr STODDART - I have been here, started in 1976 at Cradle. I've worked with Parks and Pencil Pine Lodge before it became Cradle Mountain National Park and I'm working for the department again.

We started taking road count stats almost from 1976 plus ..., so we have all those stats. But I must point out that the daily stats we take is per car; it is not the fluctuation of those cars per hour or per half hour. So you may get 400 cars; between 8 and 6 o'clock at

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

night you might get 350, but between our busy periods usually on the way in is from about 10 to 12 and on the way out it's depending on the weather. So when you are looking at - I have only just got these reports and just looked at this road thing today - I just look at it and say how can anybody come up with these statistic figures when they actually haven't got figures of the peak hour - because in one half hour you may get 100 cars or 50 cars or 60 cars. Now, if you get in one of these narrow points along the road you might have five cars coming one way, 10 cars coming the other way. If you have one got passing bays for two cars or three cars, what do you do? Cars are going to have to back up, go backwards and forwards. This new counter we have in now will give those - as far as I know - they will give those figures on maybe an hourly or a half-hourly or quarter hourly.

Mrs NAPIER - Are these some of those figures that could be made available presumably?

Mr SCHINKEL - Yes, I can get them.

Mr STODDART - Also I look at this in that what I have read in that there is no maximum number of vehicles that can use this road. I mean, to design this road you would have had to have had a maximum number of vehicles that can use that road safely.

CHAIR - At any one time.

Mr STODDART - At any one time and you need these stat figures from these special road counters, not the normal one that we have been taking for the last 20, 30 years, you need the special road counters to get those figures of fluctuations per time of day.

CHAIR - Would I be correct in assuming that you wouldn't feel comfortable about relying on designs that have been done without the knowledge that such road counts would give?

Mr STODDART - Without that knowledge and without the knowledge of knowing the maximum number of cars this road has been designed to take. That also comes into the other things people have been bringing up to Cradle Valley, Pencil Pine Valley service site plan. They talk about shuttle bus services. Now, eventually a shuttle bus service will have to come into here because we just can't keep pushing dirt aside to make car parks. There is a limit to what we can park in there.

I consider that road would be quite satisfactory for a shuttle bus service and maybe a few private cars coming in and out of the busy hours, but no-one can prove to me that this road is going to be adequate during the busy periods because those figures of the cars aren't there. The road counter they did put in for a week, you would have to look at the weather stats for that time because if it was miserable weather, those numbers could be quite well down. If it was sunny weather, they could be up. So just the weather affects the number of cars going into the visitors centre.

Mrs NAPIER - Do we know what the weather was like during that period?

Mr STODDART - As far as I know it was reasonable weather. This is not an excuse but I am just bringing those things up. If we are ever taking any surveys or facts in, even surveys of if people like shuttle bus services - it depends on what time of the day it is you take those surveys. If you take those surveys during the middle of the day when you

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

have double income people who usually go out and party late, get up late, they're the people you will get there between two and three, but if you take the survey at five, six, seven, eight o'clock in the morning when people with young kids get woken up by their young kids, you could have a totally different concept of what that survey is.

I think we most probably all watched 'Yes Minister'. There was a good one on that about surveys once. He did a survey and he said, 'I will ask the questions in a different way' and he got a totally different response. It just depends on how you take surveys and how you take road figures. The road figures that we normally take are inadequate road figures because they only give how many cars run over per day, not at peak periods or how many is going to be backing up. Also, if you drive up and down the road often enough, you will find out that you can get behind one of those people who are only doing 15 kilometres per hour or 10 kilometres per hour, you have got 20 cars behind them, not five or two that can pull over into a parking bay. If you have a few cars coming the other way, your parking bays are going to be over loaded and what are people going to do? Back, back - because you are talking about having a traffic system that is for the people but I don't think the people want to start doing that. But by them saying, 'When is the shuttle bus service coming in?' Is the shuttle bus service going to come in? We haven't got the figures on that. There is no figure saying that we are going to bring a shuttle bus service in once the vehicles on that road reach a certain point.

As I pointed out - no car parking spot. We're not going to have room to park cars, so I think all those things need to be looked into and looked into together.

CHAIR - A lot of unknowns, aren't there?

Mr STODDART - Well, unless someone can come up with some figures besides one week and it was a busy period. Our figures are down at the moment but how long they are going to stay down is another thing; they may build up. Even that counter you have in there now you may have to calculate - you get a statistic expert - Sue Runkin in Hobart can give you a lot on statistics. Our figures I think went down approximately 10 per cent last year from the year before. They expect things like the Olympics in Sydney, GST and all that and now we have got the Ansett collapse, things happening in America, numbers are down.

The December numbers we got back the other day are up to the busiest period. They are 1999, which wasn't as busy a period as 2000-01 was. So our figures have only just come back up to what they were a couple of years ago for December. So this road count you have got in here now, the figures may be down to what the figures will be so you most probably will have to add something on to those figures.

Mr GREEN - Are more people coming on buses, though?

Mr STODDART - I think you need to talk to someone like Dennis Maxwell who runs the shuttle bus service in - that takes the bus passengers in - I haven't looked at them but as far as I know he said his numbers seem to be down -

Mr GREEN - It says 30 per cent.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr STODDART - but most numbers are down for Cradle at the moment. But we are getting more buses over the period of time - over the years.

Mrs NAPIER - Tourism bus traffic has been down for two years.

Mr HARRISS - Local knowledge is always a very valuable statistic and we have heard some interesting evidence and we have a graph in front of us in our report. Can I ask Mr Barrett, given the small sample which was taken and his response to an earlier question that the road has been designed based on the existing numbers, what procedure did your firm follow to gather up some local knowledge?

Mr BARRETT - We did not speak with any of the rangers about the traffic volume.

Mr HARRISS - So nobody from your firm in this design process has spoken with the local people? Has there been any information provided to your firm by, say, the department or by anybody to allow you to -

Mr BARRETT - I think basically there has been work provided by the Department of Construction to Pitt and Sherry about the traffic volumes which came from April of last year and they do include peak hour volumes as well which, if I might add, the morning peak hour volumes for a weekday for two-way traffic is 43 vehicles per hour.

Mrs NAPIER - Do you know how that was calculated?

Mr BARRETT - That's ... by the counter itself; it records the time when vehicles pass over it.

Mr TODD - Mr Chairman, with respect to those figures, Mr Barrett referred to them and called them 'seasonally adjusted'. What that means is that the department uses traffic figures across a number of permanent sites we have to then adjust the figures that we would get in a week to then see what it would be on an annual basis, because we have other counters in other places so they can be used to adjust -

Mrs NAPIER - They're not very useful though then, are they?

Mr TODD - They certainly give you a better indication rather than just the raw figures in a week. They give you a much better indication of what they would be over the annual period by using the - in a simplistic way of saying what was it like that week in these other permanent counters, comparing those to the higher peaks and then adjusting them. It's a fairly complex statistical process - which I can't explain because that's not my field of expertise, but by no means are the figures relied - it was whatever we got that week was the answer. They are seasonally adjusted to take into account what happens across the network and would pick up what's happening in the summer peak and so those figures would be adjusted. So it's not as if they're just that one week's sample and whatever was lucky to happen that week was the final answer, so they are adjusted to take that into account.

Mr KONS - In the report, Mr Todd, you gave us earlier - the project design brief - on page 14 it talks about traffic volumes in January, an average, and in March. There's a bit of a discrepancy about the figures - where do those figures come from - 3.3 traffic issues?

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr TODD - As I understand these were actually figures that we obtained from National Parks. We did look at some of the figures that were provided by National Parks. I was looking through my folder to see if I had the record of that and I don't.

Mr SCHINKEL - That would have come from Sue Rundle, our statistician at head office.

Mr TODD - So the department had seen those figures.

Mr NEVARD - I just wanted to make the point that we are being roundly pilloried here for not talking to people. In every meeting that we've been to - every meeting, and there have been at least monthly and sometimes bi-weekly meetings - there have been Parks and Wildlife people. Hank has been at the majority of them; Allen Carman-Brown has been at them; Trevor Westron has been at them; Roy Cordiner, who is retained by the Parks and Wildlife Service as a consultant, has been at them; and other consultants working on, for example, other elements of the plan here have been at them. We constantly put things in front of people and ask them constantly, 'Do you think this is a reasonable way to approach this? Are these numbers robust et cetera, et cetera?' Hank of course is based here as the head ranger. Whenever I come here I go and see Hank and talk to him about issues. We have actually made sure that, and indeed the process has been inclusive of, not only a local level but also a strategic planning level in Hobart and also at the local northern region throughout. So I would not want it to go on the record that we had ridden roughshod over local people's opinion. I think that would be unfair and a misrepresentation.

Mr HARRISS - Nobody's suggested that.

Mr NEVARD - No, but I'm concerned that you do understand we have talked to people.

CHAIR - I think it's just being suggested there are a lot more local people who may well have different views, and we've seen that today, and your sample has been very, very limited.

Mr STODDART - Could I say something before I finish?

CHAIR - Yes, Mr Stoddart. I was going to ask you a couple of questions but just before you do, Mr Cordiner wanted to say something and then I will come back to you.

Mr CORDINER - I wanted to mention that there is a project coordinating committee which looks after all the program elements and the road is part of that. That is fairly inclusive because it includes the senior ranger here; Bob Tyson, the manager, visitor services, who is away at the moment; Trevor Westron who is the technical officer related to things like the sewerage treatment stuff; Allen Carman-Brown from Ulverstone; plus the district manager, Jeff Coles. We have Friends of Cradle Mountain who have a permanent representative, Dick Burns. We've invited and have attendance from the Sheffield Council and we've asked for other staff - Bob Tyson has arranged through Hank for other staff to be regularly present at those meetings if they can be spared from their other duties. We have an interpretive officer from the northern region and then the consultants who are working on the various projects when they're required to be there come along - so the Hydro for example on the services mains project - so I think there is a coordination process, Mr Chairman. I'm not suggesting that the evidence that you've got

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

today shouldn't have been got before. If it's good information and we're missing it then we miss something, but I wouldn't like to say that there isn't every effort being made to make it as inclusive as possible. I think the previous experience that Mr Firth had on the Friends we've made sure it's continued through and very often we've actually invited two Friends reps to be here. On special interest meetings we actually get a special group of people together outside the coordinating committee. Then regularly each of the projects has a project team meeting as well which many people attend, so it's a complicated process and it has probably the best management mechanism we can put in. But obviously if there's shortcomings in our information base we'd have to address that too.

Mr STODDART - Another thing is I think you really need to look at people's behaviour patterns in driving when they get here. You really only need to drive up and down the road a few times to find out that a lot of people cannot judge the width of that road; they cannot tell if two cars can go by. Because they are on a narrow, windy road they go very slow, which does hold up traffic. I think all these things need to be considered. Another thing is, I am not against the road design as it is as long as they bring the shuttle bus service in before the numbers get too large and where that number is who knows? A World Heritage area and to have a road like that is, as far as I'm concerned, disgusting - it's shocking. It should be upgraded; it should be done to a certain standard. But we've got to consider the amount of traffic which is going to use it at the peak periods and if that's going to be too great for the road then we've got to really consider this shuttle bus service and bringing it in.

Mr HALL - You said you were satisfied with the road design as it is or as proposed?

Mr STODDART - As proposed, but that's only as long as the shuttle bus services comes in in the near future before the numbers get up. It's inevitable that the shuttle bus service has to come in, depending on our maximum numbers. Our numbers may never get to that stage where we haven't got enough parking but we cannot put a dozer in there and push out more areas for parking. I mean, we are in a World Heritage area - we've got to be able to try to park those cars as they are. Now Ronny Creek car park that they put in temporarily, that thing gets full. Dove Lake car park gets full of cars down the road. I have seen them down the road over 100 metres. I think for a World Heritage area that's not on, the road. But, as I say, that system looks quite nice but for the volume of traffic where do we put that limit before we bring the shuttle bus service in or we put a quota of number of how many cars can enter the park at any one time. Either one has to come in eventually.

Mr GREEN - Where would you put the car park here?

Mr STODDART - Basically you have to look if there is enough room here. If not, you're going to have to bite the bullet and put it in an area where you are going to have enough room and if that means moving the visitor centre wholly and solely somewhere else that is it. Some suggestions have been that when the shuttle bus service comes in that we put a parking area somewhere else up the road so it means people drive all the way in here, get to the visitor centre and there's no parking, they have to drive all the way back and have to get in a shuttle bus service. Wouldn't it be good to try to put it all in one place to be done. That's another thing to consider.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr HALL - Just relating back to what Mr Firth said before, and I was quite interested in the concept, he talked about hollows instead of humps. I would just like to ask Mr Barrett from an engineering perspective whether that's feasible in a road design like that and to accommodate a snow plough?

Mr BARRETT - It would be highly undesirable from a road design perspective. They would get snow in them - the snow plough may go over the top and leave the snow in there. People may not realise that there is a dip in the road and those sort of dips can be very damaging to people's suspensions. They are very undesirable from a road design perspective.

Mr HALL - It would depend on the width and the depth of them.

Mr BARRETT - It does, yes. To have them to a point where they wouldn't cause any damage but they wouldn't slow people down either, they wouldn't be effective at all.

Mr GREEN - I was just going to make the point too, I guess if there was road run-off there would be a lot of water in them at times too so that would be a bit of an issue.

The question about the walking track, it seems to me that people go to Dove Lake now and get out of their cars, do the lap of the lake. Do you think that over time people will become accustomed to making that part of their day - that is, a walk from, say, where the visitor centre is now to Dove Lake?

Mr STODDART - If you put anything there people will want something to do they're going to use but most people come in for one reason and that's the view from Dove Lake car park, that's basically it. Since we've put in moderate walking tracks, upgraded the walking tracks, our clientele has changed - in other words, people would spend 10 or 15 minutes here, half an hour, an hour and now people are spending two, three, four, five, six hours here. Actually when you look at the figures and you see that the road count may be going up slightly, our work has actually gone up a lot more because people are staying longer; the more people stay the more work for us.

Mr SCHINKEL - The anecdotal evidence, Mr Chairman, is when we put the track around Dove Lake - the low level circuit in 1994 and it was completed prior to that - the average stay was about ten minutes. People drive to the car park, they had a look, they might walk to the lake and then off again. There was no real option for a lot of people unless they were fit and prepared for the conditions to walk any distance or to walk anywhere. Since that track has gone in, the movements or the characteristics of the people in the park have changed considerably; they've now got something that they can do. It's a circuit so they're not walking along one track then turning around and coming back, which was there prior to the joining of the two tracks on the left and right-hand side of the lake.

We know anecdotally that people are staying a lot longer and this has possibly changed too because of the amount of accommodation that has also been built outside the park, people have that little bit more time to spend in the park instead of travelling from Sheffield or wherever to come here, then they only have a short amount of time before they have to turn back. Whether it's a fitness thing or people's attitude towards their own

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

well-being or whatever it is, people are tending to stay longer and they want to do something, they want to go for a walk, and that's our perception of what's happening.

Mr STODDART - And that's why the car parks are getting fuller and fuller and that's why we need something done.

Mr SCHINKEL - Because people are staying; they're not staying there for a short period of time and then driving out and making room for the next.

Mr KONS - Is January the busiest month?

Mr SCHINKEL - January tends to be typically the busiest month.

Mr KONS - I'm just having a look at the report again, it says, 'The average January figures was 370 vehicles per day'. The proposal there, is there some sort of rule of thumb or any indications of traffic movements through the day that 370 vehicles would be catered for adequately under the current proposal?

Mr BARRETT - Yes, that's roughly the same as what we had from April 2001, a survey of the traffic. It's not dissimilar at all; the same as what we've already designed it for.

Mr KONS - I just did some rough calculations on 370 vehicles per day, you were talking about 135 000 vehicles per annum, you've got visitations of close to 200 000, it's probably at the higher end of vehicles.

Mr CORDINER - Excuse me, Mr Chairman, I think it's 73 000 or 67 000 vehicles -

Mr KONS - Yes, I just did 370 000 as the worst-case scenario.

Mrs NAPIER - Could I ask, following on from what you were saying, it also says on that page that the highest two-way flow was 93 vehicles per hour in January. Given those 67 different points that we're moving to single lane traffic, are you saying that the road you have designed would cater for those vehicles to keep moving and how long would it take them to do the trip?

Mr BARRETT - I haven't calculated the travel times; I'd have to get advice on that.

Mrs NAPIER - But it's indicating you would only expect bank-ups of three or four cars?

Mr BARRETT - That's what we'd expect.

Mr HALL - Through you, Mr Chairman to Hank - what sort of market demand do you think, just following on from the question Mr Green asked, in regard to the proposed track from the interpretation centre through to Waldheim, is it?

Mr SCHINKEL - Through to Ronny Creek.

Mr HALL - I just make the point being a frequent walker, as I have said, of this area, to me that doesn't thrill me a lot. I would rather get up to Dove Lake and into the action straightaway, so I'm just wondering is it going to get much use?

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr SCHINKEL - We had the same question poised when I was building the Dove Lake circuit track, that it won't get used much. I was there on 9 January, I remember it quite well, I had a volunteer with me and just to calibrate the track counter there I asked her just to sit a little way away from it and in 35 minutes we had 67 walkers go past. But this will be a little different. I say it's going to get some traffic, we haven't done any research to say, 'Yes, it's going to get a lot or a little'. We've invited comments from a lot of the people on this area when we had other meetings at the visitor's centre and people could see the value of it for their customers and clients and also an ambient of inclement weather conditions, it is another low level track that they can do.

Mr HALL - With respect, that's the sharp end up further, isn't it?

Mr SCHINKEL - That is the sharp end, that's where people want to get to.

Mr HALL - That's right and I'm just wondering - I mean, it's an unknown quantity.

Mr SCHINKEL - It is an unknown quantity.

CHAIR - Mr Stoddart, do you have a view on that, what's your opinion?

Mr STODDART - The walking track - we have to get the sewerage pumped out more than anything else within the park. That's a priority and we can't keep holding back on getting that sewerage pumped out. And it means the walking track is the cheapest form of way of getting power in and their sewerage out and everything else.

To me, if someone said, 'What would your objection be to it?', my objection is the visual impact. They said, 'You won't be able to see it' and I said, 'Don't have to, it's there'. It's still a visual impact even though it's there, even though you can't see it, you can't deny that. But if it's the cheapest way of getting the power in, getting the sewerage in, getting the sewerage out and everything else that we need for the infrastructure within the park, I've got no major objections.

CHAIR - Do you know the cost figures on that?

Mr STODDART - No, and I don't know the cost figures either of putting it under the road so I can't compare.

CHAIR - Well, I can tell you there is less than \$400 000 difference in the cost factor which, in my view, is nothing in the sweep of 20 or 30 years usage and the annual operating cost is identical.

Mr STODDART - Like I said, I don't know those figures but we have to get the power in there, we have to get the sewerage, out but my main concern with that walking track would be the visual impact; even though you can't see it, it's still there. We've put another road somewhere else, you can't see it, it's not a problem but it is still a problem, it's still a visual impact.

CHAIR - On the basis that the annual cost would be the same, and the installation cost less than \$400 000 difference, what is your view? Do you think that's a wise expenditure of money or do you think it would be better to put the services adjacent to the roadway?

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr STODDART - So what is the total cost you're talking about? You're talking about \$400 000 being 10 per cent extra?

CHAIR - I think it's about -

Mr CORDINER - Through you, Mr Chairman - the figure for the walking track that I got this morning is \$1.17 million, and the services demand currently is \$2.54 million. I would like to say that although the capital cost is, as you say, slightly different between the two options, without the walking track -

CHAIR - Less than \$400 000.

Mr CORDINER - Yes - in the Hydro report the options that they looked at investigated the road route, and the road route between Waldheim junction and the visitors centre is very tortuous. To open it to put cables and pipes in at any place you'd have to open up hundreds of metres of road at a stretch to get a reasonable length of pipe in, especially for sewage pipes. To do that, the depth is about a metre, from memory - I'm not a current electrical engineer, although I used to do this - and the width is about probably a metre as well. So you are talking about a cubic metre of rock, or a cubic metre of excavation to a metre length, which is 6 000 cubic metres of excavation of which you then have to get that rock out, put down the pipes, put the bedding back and refill it, and all at the same time keep the road open.

That presents a considerable disruption to road users, in fact it would be far in excess of anything that is contemplated at the moment. Although there is minor cost in that, I don't think that cost estimate in any way takes in the full community cost of trying to do that. There were suggestions to do it at night, in one particular report, and that was ruled on occupational health and safety grounds, and in fact even that window isn't really a window if you have to keep open 100 metres of trench or more while you put the pipe in, and you have three services to coordinate, and backfill it.

The Hydro report, which I realise is not the subject of this submission, I am quite prepared, as I have mentioned to you previously, to have the Hydro brief you on their options analysis. We will be making a submission separately to the parliamentary standing committee on that because it's subject to separate funding and we don't have the full funding for it, and it will include the services mains and the walking tracks ... The provision that is being made now is the necessary provision between Dove Lake and Ronny Creek.

If we are making personal assessments - and I'm a lapsed engineer - I'd have to say that if we don't build the walking track and put the services along it, we will be pumping the sewerage out from Waldheim junction and we will never get there with our communications and sewerage across the road. If we have another route to choose - I think that one was chosen, it's been very carefully assessed for impact. The environmentalists have gone through it; Mr Schinkel has spent literally days walking the route with planners, he has walked it with Mr Firth, who is on the project team for that. My personal opinion is that it is a very elegant solution which we have put forward to you, and I don't think it's fair to try to put that forward in a project sense now when I don't have the people here and we haven't prepared a solution to you.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

I did prepare a short paper, the one that we are using to brief people who have public comment on the visitor services ... because there are a lot of approaches about that, but I don't even want to table it now unless I give you the impression that it's not well thought through and you're not getting a full submission on it, but we have a full design on it.

CHAIR - Mr Cordiner, could you provide us with a copy of the Hydro report?

Mr CORDINER - Yes. If I could table a short report of three pages.

CHAIR - Yes, and then also the Hydro report, if that could be provided to Mrs Thurstans.

Mr CORDINER - Yes, certainly.

CHAIR - I take it you don't have a copy of the Hydro report here available to tender?

Mr CORDINER - Mr Chairman, there was an original report done by the Hydro, it is mentioned in the zone planning. There is another one followed by GH & D. The Hydro then submitted a further report. They was then, when funds were made available, commissioned to do the project from start to finish, and a schematic design they presented and options report. That's the one I'd like to give to you, and then you could take that and perhaps if you want background stuff that is referenced in it, we could get that for you if that would be the way to go. We also have now design development details, so if you'd like at a time for the committee to have a presentation of that, it could be arranged, but I would like to do that in context.

CHAIR - For the walking track.

Mr CORDINER - It's the walking track and services mains that's fully designed to design-development stage. That is where I am getting the limit of cost estimates from.

CHAIR - Thank you, Mr Cordiner. Mr Stoddart, there was that aspect of the walking track. If it were not for that, if it were not for the services - and you heard what Mr Cordiner has said about that and we will need to make some assessment about that - and it was being proposed to build a walking track along this particular route, would you think that was wise expenditure of money? It's hypothetical, I know.

Mr STODDART - It is very hypothetical and it's not -

CHAIR - Forget the services. From the point of view of walkers, is that something desirable?

Mr STODDART - I will answer it. It is outside what I should be answering but I will answer it: no way. Basically we have x amount of walking tracks around here in various environments, in various types of vegetation and everything else where people can get the feel of the place through those, and a lot of those need major attention. So therefore why would you build a track that runs along a road that already has access where most people wish to drive? As I said, people want to go to Dove Lake, they don't want to go anywhere else. So if it wasn't for the services needing to go in, no, the track would be ridiculous to build when you have so much other work to do.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

CHAIR - Thank you, because that's my feeling.

Mr SCHINKEL - I agree.

CHAIR - Would you like to add anything to that, Mr Schinkel?

Mr SCHINKEL - Just to reiterate what Dennis has said, the services allow for that option, but you wouldn't do it the other way round because there are a lot of tracks that still need attention, and trying to keep up with that is a major job.

CHAIR - Yes. Thank you very much.

Mr HARRISS - Mr Chairman, I just want to finally come back to this issue of the road again. I have finally come to the realisation, I think, that I should be divorcing myself from the management issue of a shuttle bus. That, to me, will end up a management issue based upon some thorough research. But even divorcing myself from that, and if a shuttle bus is to be introduced, which seems somewhat inevitable - and if my memory serves me correctly, earlier on in the day we had evidence, I think, from Mr Nevard, who said we would probably design the road differently if it was only going to be used for a shuttle bus service - we are basing the design of this road on some vehicle movements per day and for passenger vehicles. This committee is being asked to consider the expenditure of \$2 million to build a road which essentially will be used for something else. Would the cost of reconstructing this road be significantly less with this alternative design if in fact it was only going to be used for a shuttle bus service?

CHAIR - I think it was Mr Barrett who said that in his evidence, that it would have been designed differently.

Mr NEVARD - I did agree with him.

Mr HARRISS - So to me, that is a major question. We have a proposal before us based on passenger vehicle usage and we have been told after the visit today that it's going to be some parts two-lane, some parts one-lane with passing bays. If I refer to the draft services zone plan again, at the very maximum we're told that there's going to be 11 buses a day - three and a half an hour - so we're not talking about major volumes of buses and yet we're spending \$2 million building a road which we probably don't need to build with good communication systems between buses. My question is: could the cost of this project be significantly reduced if the road was only going to be used for shuttle buses?

Mr BARRETT - If the objective is reduce the impact of the road on the environment, the solution is to seal it and it wouldn't make any difference at all to the cost if the design was for shuttle buses or for cars. The two designs would be different. The design we're proposing here now would work quite adequately for shuttle buses, so the design doesn't include shuttle buses in the future, but a design just solely for shuttle buses would still cost a very similar order of magnitude.

Mr HARRISS - But is it fair to say though that there wouldn't need to be anywhere near the number of passing bays and there wouldn't be the need to reduce some of these two-lane section into one-lane sections? There seems to be some measure of work being

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

undertaken on this project to accommodate at a maximum 360-370 vehicles per day when we're just not going to have that volume. To oversimplify the matter, we just going and put a blacktop on it.

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - Mr Chairman, may I just -

CHAIR - Just before you do, I think Mr Harris is asking Mr Barrett this question and then I'll give you the opportunity to come back.

Mr BARRETT - I believe if you were going to carry out the treatment you're proposing on the road, which is a ... bitumen stabilisation ... seal it, if we were to do that for the whole road as it stands at the moment it would cost substantially more, because it's actually reducing the area of the road by narrowing into one lane in some sections. If we were to ... seal it as it is at the moment there would be a larger area sealed and treated and it would cost more.

Mr HARRISS - So this committee can be absolutely assured that substantial savings cannot be generated by reconstructing the road simply for shuttle buses - that's categorical?

Mr BARRETT - Yes, I believe so.

Mr NEVARD - I'd like to put on record my agreement because we were the joint designers of the road and we thought through this process in terms of cost and I'm pretty confident that's right because I've just been trying to think where you would make savings, simply because we are reducing the width of the road but we're maintaining the ability for people to pass. We're also maintaining the ability of the road to be used if a shuttle bus, for example, fails. I think that is a key issue.

Mr GREEN - Can I just make a point? We've talked a lot about the road and I know we've got some maps sitting there. I was just wondering whether the engineer has larger drawings and could take us through them and explain his reasoning through the various sections. I think perhaps it would make it a little easier because I think we've all got in our heads what we're talking about in terms of passing bays but it would be interesting to see from the engineer's perspective how he sees it. So I thought we could propose a break for a few moments, Mr Chairman, to allow him to get them up.

CHAIR - Before we do, Mr Carman-Brown wanted to add something to respond to the question Mr Harris asked.

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - Just to make a point of clarification. It would not be a fair question that there either be just vehicles or a bus shuttle system. The situation now is that we have a design where the road caters for buses and normal car and truck vehicles. In the future if we opt for a public transportation system, which is a bus shuttle service, there will still be the need to bring other vehicles down there, not just service vehicles, Parks, but other types of vehicles. There are many exemptions we'd be allowing for. Not only that, there'd always be a mix of buses and other vehicles outside the hours of normal operation of a bus shuttle service. Therefore the design of the road in any state has to cater for both those transport needs.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr KONS - That would be a future policy decision anyway; we're just here to have a look at this project and not hypothesise about what may happen in the future.

CHAIR - That's right.

SHORT ADJOURNMENT

CHAIR - We are just going to resume and take a couple of things into evidence. I think Mr Nevard would like to tender some documents in evidence.

Mr NEVARD - By way of an explanation, you have been taken by myself and Allen Carman-Brown through the planning process. It is subject to your recommendations on the project, but also thanks to your agreement to allow us to go to tender, because we are in a position where if we're not ready to push the button we won't be able to do it this year at all, and weather is an issue on that. I just wanted to put in for the committee's information - because some of the figures that have been referred to with regard to traffic et cetera are in these documents - to show that it has been through another process, which we have not referred to, which is not a formal planning process. But before these tender documents went out to contractors, potentially interested parties who want to construct the project, we went to a contractor who is not involved in the project and asked him to go through all these documents from their practical buildability - we are talking about somebody with calluses on their hands, who drives big stuff - to say is this a practical way of doing something, will this work, or is it going to fall over on its ear? So before this went out anywhere it went through that process as well, so I think you need to be aware of that, so we know it is practically buildable, that's the point, and very few projects have that process in them.

So if I can give you these, and they do have other information. They also have copies of these plans, plus all the cross-sections, I think, in a slightly more accessible way than in that document which you have already had, although a lot of the documentation is similar. It is written in plain language for contractors. This is why we want you to do it this way.

CHAIR - Thanks, Mr Nevard. We will take both of those documents into evidence. We will just disassemble to have an explanation of the plans by Mr Barrett.

Mr BARRETT - These plans are actually three sets of plans, produced at a scale of 1:1000, so approximately 8 kilometres of road takes up approximately 8 metres of paper. At the left-hand end here we have the visitor centre right at the start of the road where the current seal ends. At this point we plan to erect signs indicating that the road is a single-lane road with passing lanes and that there will be no further signs for them along each of the passing lanes, so there will be a one-off sign right at the beginning to inform people. We have also put right at the beginning a single-lane section so that they see the sign, they can see a single-lane section right in front of them, so they can clearly see what the sign is talking about.

CHAIR - Just at the beginning, or every time there is a single lane?

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr BARRETT - Just at the beginning, and we are planning to put them also at the Waldheim junction and also again at Dove Lake for people returning. Waldheim junction was considered an appropriate place because there is already a built-up environment with houses so the signs there aren't going to have the same impact as they would by placing them at all of the single-lane sections.

Mr NEVARD - Just to cover that, that was an issue we raised specifically with the safety people in DIER. We explained the geometry to them, and we expected them to say, 'No, you will need signage at each and every single change in the road', and because they believe this will have an overall safety and performance improvement they felt it was unnecessary.

CHAIR - Who are these people in Safety Division in DIER?

Mr BARRETT - We are talking about the Chief Traffic Engineer, Milan Prodanovic.

CHAIR - Is he in the Road Safety Section?

Mr BARRETT - I don't know what the official name of his section is.

Mr TODD - With respect, Mr Chairman, the Traffic Standards Branch.

CHAIR - Not specifically Road Safety?

Mr TODD - That is a major part of his role. It also involves setting speed limits and all those things across the State.

Mr BARRETT - According to the design, this section here is from the visitor centre right through to the Dove Lake car park, which is definitely not changing what is there. At the moment you will see areas where we've got one lane, where at present they are one lane because of the physical presence of trees, and we are just formalising those arrangements. The vast majority of this first section where we are putting one-lane sections in they already are one lane, except where we might have a longer length of road where there are currently no restrictions and there are currently two lanes. This section here is several hundred metres long. If we allowed it to stay at two lanes the traffic speeds would increase substantially, so in these areas we have actually put in a number of single-lane sections.

CHAIR - I thought there were several this morning, at least several, where it is double lane now and they are going to be reduced to single lanes. That was the impression I had on the tour.

Mr BARRETT - Yes, there will be situations like this where there is -

Mrs NAPIER - How many?

Mr BARRETT - I haven't counted them all up so I can't give an accurate figure.

Mrs NAPIER - Have we doubled the number of single-lane sections?

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr BARRETT - No, they certainly wouldn't be doubled. There might be, in this particular section, an extra 20 per cent single-lane sections than at present. The vast majority of the single-lane sections are there because of physical objects or trees. To give an understanding of the design philosophy behind where we have located the one-lane sections, we have located them at the starts and ends so that as a car is approaching a one-lane section from a two-lane section they can see right to the end of that one-lane section and beyond so that they can see if there is a car coming and whether or not they have to give way, to prevent the occurrence of two vehicles ending up in a one-lane section head to head and someone having to back back. They will physically be able to see right to the end and beyond the one-lane section.

Mr KONS - We heard that there were 67 of these passing lanes. What number were there before?

Mr BARRETT - I haven't counted them so I can't give an estimate of how many single-lane sections there are at present.

Mrs NAPIER - But you could provide the committee with that, presumably.

Mr BARRETT - Yes, I could.

Mrs NAPIER - Probably separately for the section through to Dove Lake from Waldheim, and from Waldheim back to the visitor centre, or the Waldheim turn-off.

Mr BARRETT - Yes. I have here a section where coming up to the hairpin corner, which we saw this morning on the tour, we wanted to put in some single-lane sections in this area. It presently is two lanes and we wanted to create some single-lane sections to reduce the speeds, because you are coming up to a reasonably sharp corner, and if people slow, get their speeds down before they actually get to the corner just to increase the safety. Beyond the corner most of the ... of the single-lane sections are caused by the physical presence of trees.

Mr NEVARD - So they're already there.

Mr BARRETT - They're already there.

Mrs NAPIER - Is it likely that there are some sections where it was two laned but there was a tree down on the edge of the road? Would you change that into a single lane because of the proximity of the tree or would you retain that as a double lane?

Mr BARRETT - If there are some areas where we can fit two lanes past the tree then we would aim to have it as two lanes.

Mr NEVARD - I think the short answer to that question is if the tree already constricts the road to a single lane then it is single lane. If it is two lanes they would be retained as long as it was safe. To put no finer gloss on it, wherever that decision has been made it turns on safety, nothing else, so where it has moved from two lanes to one it has been changed on safety grounds.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

CHAIR - On that question of safety, I take it that there are no parts of the road at the moment that are dangerous in the way that the road was previously dangerous when that section collapsed involving the four deaths. Work has been done since, as I understand it, to make it safe so that there is not that type of risk on the existing road any longer?

Mr BARRETT - My understanding is that there was a safety audit carried out some time after the accident or the incident that you are referring to and there have been works that have been carried out as a result of that safety audit. The extent that those recommendations of that audit have been carried out, I am uncertain -

CHAIR - You are uncertain of what, Mr Barrett?

Mr BARRETT - To the extent that it has been carried out.

Mr TODD - Mr Chairman, we implemented all the works out of the safety audit that were categorised as for immediate attention, so they were works that were undertaken so that those issues have now been addressed. Can I just place on the record that the road did not collapse. I just want to make that quite clear, that it was not a structural failing of the road. The vehicle ended up in a tragic accident and I guess it's up to the coroner to make his findings on that but, from my point of view, there was no evidence that I could see that the road failed structurally, so I just would like to get that on the record if I may.

CHAIR - Yes, thank you, Mr Todd. So it is now considered that there is no dangerous place which would cause anything like that to happen again.

Mr TODD - I believe that we have now addressed those situations in those particular locations, yes.

CHAIR - Thank you. So, Mr Barrett, if you would just like to explain this. As far as possible, if you could explain it, so that anybody reading the Hansard transcript would understand the sections of road we are referring to, so if there are any identifiable features if you would just mention those.

Mr BARRETT - All right. This next section that we are looking at carries on from the first sheet we saw and it is past Fisch Creek and includes the Waldheim Spur Road, the junction with the main road along to Waldheim Spur Road and also part of the road which goes past Ronny Creek car park. Now, coming up to the Waldheim junction this section, as you can see, is very much the same as the previous sheet and the design is possibly exactly the same with the vast majority of the one-lane sections there because of the physical constraints of the objects adjacent to the road.

CHAIR - All right. Thank you - nothing else you wish to point out on that?

Mr BARRETT - I would like to speak to you about the junction. Our design has squared up the Waldheim Spur Road junction onto the Cradle Mountain tourist road to allow people to see both left and right easily without having to turn their head around behind them to see vehicles heading north to the junction thereby improving safety. The Waldheim Spur Road - that is the full section of the Waldheim Spur Road on this plan - this currently is a one-lane road with a number of very short passing bays and we are substantially leaving that as it is. The function of the road will be pretty much as it is at the moment - it will

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

be one lane. We are formalising the passing lanes, improving the structural capacity of those passing lanes so that vehicles will be able to see them and use them.

At present on the one lane section of this road if two vehicles meet going head on one will have to back-back to allow the other car through and that is what will happen with this design as well, so it won't be changed at all.

Mr GREEN - Can you explain to the committee the actual line markings on the road for the future?

Mr BARRETT - Yes, the road will be sealed. We're not going to be putting any line marking on the road except for areas where we have a sharp crest and we will line mark the centre line to physically separate oncoming vehicles.

Mr GREEN - It's interesting. So on the passing the dual lane sections of the road there, there is going to be nothing to discriminate that against the single?

Mr BARRETT - There will be no line marking to show the difference between the two-lane and one-lane section. We are showing the one-lane sections by the physical barriers we will be putting on the road where the road narrows so that people will be able to see a barrier and they will see the road narrow very obviously.

Mrs NAPIER - Why wouldn't you put a line down through the middle of the two-lane?

Mr BARRETT - It probably comes back to aesthetics. Currently there are no lines there at the moment.

CHAIR - Aesthetics compared with safety, aesthetics dominate?

Mr NEVARD - I think it's a matter of degree and the extra degree offered by line marking down the middle of the road - again, we discussed this with the road traffic people and DIER. The extra advantage given by that doesn't really provide us, given the fact that we are going 40 kilometres an hour, you can belt and brace everything, it is quite possible to do that and again, as I said in evidence earlier on, you have the opportunity and solution to go back to this out here. All you need to do is to look at, it's my submission, to know which way is best. If it works in safety terms then we have gone to great extent to try to disprove our proposal, if you like, the devil's advocate approach.

CHAIR - All right. Does the committee have any questions?

Mr KONS - Do you keep the records of accidents that occur on the road if they are reported to you?

Mr SCHINKEL - The accidents that we do have at the moment, we had a person ring up a little while ago saying they'd had a scrape, and I think their insurance company wanted to know something about it.

Mr KONS - Is that a regular thing?

Mr SCHINKEL - No, it's not - very irregular.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr KONS - Is it possible for the committee to give us a breakdown in metres from the start to the end, double lane, 50 metres; single lane, 10, just to break it up as it is on the map?

Mr BARRETT - That's possible, yes.

Mr KONS - Just a sheet, because just looking at the map makes it difficult to say there's 80 metres there of double lane, 20 of single for the whole length.

Mr BARRETT - We haven't got that at the moment, but we can certainly provide it.

Mr KONS - I'd appreciate that, thank you.

CHAIR - Thanks very much, Mr Barrett.

Mr BARRETT - One more plan to go.

CHAIR - Oh, another one. Is this the one that has been left the way the World Heritage Plan wants it left in its present state?

Mr BARRETT - This plan here shows the road from just south of Ronny Creek car park through to the Dove Lake car park. This road at present is a two-lane road, and what we are proposing in the design is to reduce it to a mixture of one lane and two lanes in a similar fashion to the previous sections of road. The current road design speed is substantially higher than the previous section of road. We consider that sealing this road would substantially increase vehicle speeds and would have a very adverse impact on safety. Our idea behind introducing one-lane sections and narrowing the road is to slow vehicles down so that safety issues which would come as a result of sealing the road are no longer there. If we can keep the vehicle speeds down then the safety issues are not of concern.

Mr NEVARD - There are substantial changes to the geometry of this section, unlike the previous section.

CHAIR - Yes, that's right - contrary to that World Heritage Management Plan.

Mr STODDART - I would like to ask one question. We are talking about speed limits, like slowing things down because of this and this, has anybody done a survey on the road on what the average speed is on that road? In other words, is there a constant habit of people speeding even though the road is in the condition it's in?

CHAIR - On that particular one?

Mr STODDART - No, on the existing road now. Was there ever a survey done on that to see the limit that people do drive on it?

CHAIR - We have some figures before us.

Mr STODDART - Right, because if people are speeding on that, what's to stop them speeding on anything you put in? It doesn't matter what you're going to put in.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

CHAIR - I think the department can make available those figures to you, we have a scale of them and it's quite an interesting analysis.

Mr NEVARD - I guess my point to that is traffic calming, which is what we're talking about here, is the only way you can change people's behaviour. We have actually discussed this informally, and talked about putting speed cameras in. It's a revenue-raising potential for the national park to have speed cameras, people are frightened of speed cameras. We can hide speed cameras quite well, that is an option to put in certain places. At the end of the day, you only need one person to ignore the speed camera and go too fast and kill somebody, and you may have raised the revenue but you haven't actually solved the problem.

What we have tried to do is the best effort we can, and as critical as anybody is as they like, if there is a better way of doing it to reduce traffic speed then Leigh and I would be the first people to give up on promoting this and adopt that. So if somebody has a better solution, we would very much like it. We actually don't know that this is the best, but it certainly is the most robust to date. Essentially it reduces speed, which is the whole purpose of the geometry, and really I am pretty confident, given the process that it's been through, that it will work. People can be critical but if they have an alternative I'd like to hear it because we've been through most of them. I think it's about being constructive as well.

CHAIR - You said there were three alternative ways to deal with this matter. I just wanted to suggest there is a third one, and that is that the whole project be deferred until certain finality comes about in respect of matters such as whether there's going to be a shuttle bus service, what the final management plan will be for this area, and matters such as that - and the coroner's finding was the other one. It seems to me that the committee will have to decide as a committee - and I don't know what other members' views are, but it seems to me that that is certainly a very real alternative because there are so many uncertainties. We have heard that the danger factor has been removed so there is not, according to the evidence, any urgent factor from the point of view of safety. I have a feeling that if this proposal is implemented, that will cause danger in the way that I have outlined in asking questions. So a deferring of the whole matter is another option, and I just put that to you as a fourth alternative. If you wish to comment you may, but don't feel under any obligation.

Mr NEVARD - The only downside of doing that is that the ongoing environmental damage, the ongoing botanical environmental damage and, on a personal level, visual impacts through dust et cetera will go on happening. The reason for the project in the first place was to reduce those issues in the context of the Tasmanian wilderness World Heritage Area so deferral will allow them to continue; implementation effectively curtails them.

CHAIR - I recognise that's a valid point. As opposed to that, it's been happening for decades unfortunately, so I don't think another few months is going to substantially aggravate that and in that time we should have the coroner's finding, there would be enough time to make a decision one way or another on the shuttle bus and also on a management plan. It just seems to be, in my view, premature to be spending \$2 million plus on somewhat controversial designs before a number of relevant factors can be made certain.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr CORDINER - Could I suggest a slight modification to that? The impact of the shuttle bus, with or without the shuttle bus, is going to result in some changes, as we heard, to the road design. Is it possible for the committee to take further evidence on that and make a decision once that information is available? In other words, there's a considerable amount of work to do anyway to the road even if it were for a shuttle bus and limited passenger vehicles. I am sure the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources has reasons for wanting to proceed with the road expeditiously and I'm very certain that the Parks and Wildlife department also has reasons to see those matters addressed. I believe that the introduction of the shuttle bus is going to take quite some time to plan, negotiate and fund. We have been advised- and I think Mr Carman-Brown will confirm this - that it's a major pathway approval process under the World Heritage Area Management Plan and so I can see extensive delays if we try to resolve all those issues and there are funding issues about transit centres and new parking stations and so on. I would just like to suggest perhaps that coming back with evidence about the design changes that will emanate from that might give you some chance to reflect on that before you made a final recommendation.

Mrs NAPIER - What time period do we expect the approval process would take for the world management for this Pencil Pine visitor zone planning approval?

Mr CORDINER - This particular one, if the commentary is positive and if the matter of the Dove Lake shelter is resolved - I cannot give you a time frame on that because there's a matter of negotiation at the end of that - but I would hope a couple of months after it closes. Allen, is that 2 to 3 months?

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - I would say it would be a little bit longer than that.

Mr CORDINER - Certainly we will miss this winter construction period for the road. I don't think there's any doubt that it'll be in the winter when that's resolved. But nevertheless I think the shuttle tour bus, because of the major change - a lot of research has to be done, there are a lot of decisions in principle that have to be made by the Government and further funding has to be obtained, so I would like to say that I'm sure it would be operationally very inconvenient to both the Department of Roads and Transport and Parks and Wildlife if we deferred the decision or the committee recommended deferring the decision until the shuttle tour bus is finally resolved.

CHAIR - So are you suggesting that we consider deferring it for a shorter period and, if so, till when?

Mr CORDINER - To get some information so that you can get to know the differential in cost between the two options and what that really means.

CHAIR - And until this is finalised?

Mr CORDINER - That's something that I can't comment on, that's a decision of yours.

CHAIR - So can we ask for some indication as to when it is likely that this site management plan could be finalised?

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - The closing date for the site management plan is end of February, I know that I'm off for all of March so nothing is going to happen. I would say it would take at least sometime in June because there are a number of processes that we have to go through.

Mrs NAPIER - Is it likely though, given that we all agree that there's a cost factor in here and that has political ramifications in terms of consumer and tourist reaction and whether visitors are willing to make that trade-off in terms of cost or whether the Government is likely to come up with the money for a free service or that the trade-off might be relative to park service fees and so on, is it possible in fact that this could take years?

Mr CORDINER - It is possible it'll take quite a while. We think it's a medium term not a short term strategy and therefore the money that's going to be wasted, if you like, has to be seen in the terms of the economic life of the work they do if it turns out in five years time that it could have been a degree smaller if a shuttle bus comes in. So there's a degree of pragmatism and it's the other values of having it done, the other benefits of having it done need to be weighed against this differential in cost. Now that differential I think you need to know if we can arrive at it through the design engineers, because I would hate to see the process stall.

Mr NEVARD - The differential in cost not only includes the physical construction of the road, it also includes and is relevant to the way in which the bus service is introduced, as you said, with regard to government subsidy et cetera.

Mrs NAPIER - Whether it's just peak season or high time?

Mr NEVARD - There's an inevitable debate and a process to go through and my experience of these matters would put years on it, not months.

Mr GREEN - With all due respects to your comments about the fourth option, I don't believe that it is appropriate to have a fourth option at this stage.

CHAIR - The committee will consider that but I put that up to get comment from the witnesses so if you'd like to put anything to the witnesses I think that's the way to do that.

Mr GREEN - Okay. Given that I don't believe there is a fourth option that would delay the project months if not years under the circumstances maybe that are put forward and given that we know that there is going to be a continued increase of usage of the road as it stands at the moment, do you think that the sort of delays that we're talking about could in fact, given that politics has been mentioned in this delay to the road to the point where we in fact we lose sight of what was originally planned and that is, to upgrade the road to maintain the experience - and just as a sideline the fact is that we're not going to be cutting down any trees along the side of the road to ensure that it's double lanes the whole way so there are going to be single lane sections. Do you think that it would be wise under the circumstances to delay it and allow politics to then take over in terms of the arguments about the shuttle buses et cetera for the future of the park itself?

Mr NEVARD - I can't answer that question directly in regard to politics obviously, but I can base this on some experience. When the conservation community found out that we were talking about designing the road so the wildlife kill was reduced - and I'm talking

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

about the Conservation Committee right across Australia - they were very supportive of the approach and believed that it was 'Thank God somebody's doing it this way'. So certainly they would be disappointed if there was a change in the process and a moving away from that. You have to balance that and if the committee feels that the safety issue is the issue on which this turns, and if I am picking up the tenor of the committee, it is safety which is a key concern - money as well of course, but safety is a key concern - then maybe you could seek some resolution which resolves for your peace of mind the issue of safety, is this a safe solution? Because if it is a safe solution it gives you the breathing space that it is inevitably going to take before you introduce a bus service. It doesn't put pressure on that process other than to do it properly and to allow all of those things in relation to a shuttle bus to be properly canvassed.

Mr GREEN - The safety aspect, as we've heard, in terms of we've had one very serious accident and we're awaiting the coroner's report, we understand that. We understand that there have been measures put in place to eliminate that for the future. We have heard evidence that there have been little or no accidents other than minor scrapes between vehicles on the road. It is always hard when you are thinking about roads to get it out of your mind that you're not talking about 60 kilometre sections and 80 kilometre sections, the whole road is basically a 40 kilometre section. I have to admit that my main concern has been about the logistics of traffic management, given the volumes of vehicles that are coming in, that passing bays might not be able to cope and things like that. I don't think there's any life-threatening situations resulting from that, I just think that logistically it would be very difficult to manage those sorts of things. You get the odd rabbit, I know that will always -

Mr NAVARD - Yes, but rabbits are okay.

Mr GREEN - No, you get the odd driver, they wouldn't tread on an ant. They probably missed every ant on the national park but then turn the key on in their car and go berserk. You get people like that. To me, it's more about the logistics of the single lanes versus the double lanes and how people are going to actually cope with that from a driver management point of view. I just want to add that to what I said. I'm quite satisfied that, given the department has carried out the work to ensure where there are steep banks, et cetera, those areas are protected and that the speeds that people should be travelling along the road would eliminate the sorts of serious head-on collisions that you would expect to find on other arterial-type roads. That's my view of that.

Mr CORDINER - As a response to Mr Green, I believe it's an upgrading program of a road. Everybody seems to agree it's necessary. It seems to me what's been argued about is design detail and addressing the loading on the road and that means that further design work could be done as another alternative to addressing the issues that have been raised and coming back to the committee and saying, 'Look, we've talked again to the people who've raised the concerns. We've worked through it as best we possibly can and in the short to medium term this is the best result for this road upgrading which is obviously necessary' and then leave the committee with a chance to make the decision.

Mr NEVARD - That was going to be my suggestion in essence, exactly that. Forgive me, you are right, the issues - the logistics, if I can call that traffic management. If we could satisfy the committee that safety was not an issue and if we could satisfy the committee that, if you like, modelling of the process produced an answer which essentially said it

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

could work then would that, Sir, deal with your - I can't ask the committee obviously - but does that seem a sensible suggestion? The only caveat that I would put on it, Roy, is this that any delay in the timing from now effectively pushes the project into next year because of the window over the summer being so short and we do lose a year. So it is an issue that you need to consider in that political context because doing the safety and logistics work - and I'm going to need to ask Leigh to give me a time for that because essentially they're both in his court, he is the engineer - because there's a time, there's a cost implication for DIER as well involved in it.

Mrs NAPIER - Just following on from that, if we were to do that we would at least need a forecast of what we thought the growth in the peak load factor was going to be on an hourly basis in high season. I want to ask a question because I know people will ask me whether I asked that question: why couldn't we make it a two lane road through, sealed? Yes, it would mean that there may be some tree sections and some banks that have to go. There's already one section, I think you indicated, where you are going to take out the rock face to make it a safe two lane section. Why couldn't we make it a two-lane winding road and use speed cameras instead?

Mr NEVARD - That is an option; speed cameras are certainly an option. As I said though, there are two steps and the first step is this: a two-lane road would be much faster, people will travel along it much faster than they would a one-lane road - they just will.

Mrs NAPIER - I accept the speed argument.

Mr NAVARD - So if we're reliant on an electronic system of speed reduction rather than a physical system - that is, making the road control the speed - that doesn't stop the people who just don't care because they'll just pay the fine, they'll go too fast, they'll kill animals and they'll possibly kill people. Because of the nature of the behaviour, as I said, on the buses certain animals - quolls in particular - will run along, and devils will too, in front of the vehicle rather than just get off the road and so you have to literally stop them and let them decide which way they're going to go. You can't do that at 60 and 70 but you can do it at 40 and in fact your behavioural process is slowed down to the point that you will. I believe that the geometry of the road as it's designed - and remember I wasn't responsible for the design of the road in that sense, Leigh was and indeed others in Pitt and Sherry who are amongst the leading traffic engineers at this stage, in fact I'll go further and say they probably are - the internal design process we've been through has looked at all of the options of changing driver behaviour because that's what it distills down to. Speed cameras are a very good idea. I would actually like to see them in place because I think they will raise revenue for the Parks and Wildlife Service, apart from anything else.

CHAIR - I think they'd probably be lucky to get that revenue back to them.

Laughter.

Mr NAVARD - I guess I see them as additive, not necessarily preventative, and that's what would worry me about that proposal, that it doesn't so much as prevent as sanction. I'm looking for a design solution that actually reduces the risk of speed through its physical configuration.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr CORDINER - I just wanted to suggest another element to this. The untying of your approval or recommendation from the update of the zone plan I think is pretty important. The existing zone plan, as I understand it, covers the upgrade of the road, so it has been addressed and there's more detail but I don't think the principle has changed. The zone plan update was more to do with the services mains walking track and the attempted resolution of matters at Dove Lake. We didn't feel - and it was a minor pathway process under World Heritage Area listing - that if it was possible to consider not having it tied to that but to the coronial inquiry and the resolution of detailed design issues, I think that would be a very reasonable outcome from Parks and Wildlife and DIER's point of view.

CHAIR - And if the committee did opt to take that course I take it that the proponents would liaise with people who have given evidence expressing concern about the design? I think you said that, Mr Cordiner.

Mr CORDINER - Yes, and I thought also that if we have this public comment period that any input we get from the public in relation to the road itself could also be factored in and presented back to the committee because we're getting comments in now.

Mrs NAPIER - Just following on from that, the only problem with that is this question that I accept logistically that it might be difficult to put the services mains under the road rather than through a relatively pristine valley and the only reason we're putting a walking track through there is because that's a line you could take the services through. But I must admit if there was a way to put that services line under the ground at the side of the road or under the road, I think I'd prefer to do that than build another walking track that just adds to the maintenance issues.

CHAIR - Or close to the road in some place.

Mr NEVARD - May I touch on that? Putting it under the road is an option but there are two downsides to that, one of which is that a lot of this end of the road has very little coverage over the native rock and so actually physically doing it is quite hard. The second thing is that because of that - and Roy has already touched on this - it will take a long time, so the disruption of the road for tourism access et cetera has the potential to create substantial political plus timing issues. Really, if you add those two issues together then almost the path of least resistance - I'm sorry to use the pun - is underneath the walking track and that is why I think it makes a lot of sense, although it's not my project.

Others have expressed personal opinions as to whether they would or wouldn't use it. Because I'm middle-aged and fat I probably would and I'd quite like to use it because it passes through a number of different environments and has the potential to be a very good interpretative walk and one which is level, not steep, and is of a good length. It's about six kilometres long which is roughly the same length as the Dove Lake track, so I would use it.

CHAIR - What about the services in areas where it's not appropriate to put it under or close to the road, being in the vegetation but near to the road and not as far away as the walking track and not under a walking track? Is that not open to consideration?

Mr NEVARD - You'd need to disturb the vegetation and the -

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

CHAIR - But you will anyway, with a walking track, won't you?

Mr NEVARD - Not to the same degree. The World Heritage Area management people in Canberra - you must speak to this - were very concerned that no substantive damage to the fabric of the World Heritage Area take place, so I would say we would have a very big hurdle in Canberra to get over if we followed that route.

CHAIR - I understand what you're saying because under the track it would be above the surface.

Mr SCHINKEL - Just going back to what Tim was saying regarding data, we now have a lot more hard data in terms of quarter-hourly loads on the road. Whether that can be factored in over the January period which along with Easter is our peak period and also to take into consideration that we have Doherty Hotels constructing a 120-room hotel which will also add to the spike of our hourly rate. There is a particular time people tend to leave their accommodation to go up the valley - in one hour just recently I think there were 84 cars heading up the valley - and our concern there is whether these passing bays will be enough to take those spikes because there is going to be some frustration with cars backing up. I can get that data to you if you can do any modelling or extrapolation on that.

Mr KONS - The fact that we've been told that there's about 67 of these passing bays and if you're talking about 90 vehicles on that road in that one hour, the chances of banking up would be pretty limited. I was happy to hear the comment from the engineer that roughly 65 per cent of the road is going to be two lanes and about 35 per cent will reduce down to one, which reduces the impact of that. I think principally we are focused on safety. The hypothetical of whether it becomes a shuttle service or not to me doesn't really matter. The issue that matters to me - and I probably address this to Mr Todd - is that when the coroner's report comes down it makes recommendations that the Transport department have a look at those and what sort of process would they go in to look at implementing some of those. In the past with those sorts of recommendations from coroners, just as a feel-comfortable-for-me the process, is do you go through and assess them all and you've pre-empted the ones that you've done so, if I was happy that these get seriously looked at when they do come down, it would create a lot of satisfaction for me.

Mr TODD - I can assure the committee that the department would certainly look at the recommendations and consider them very seriously but, without knowing what is in the report, I really can't add anything more to that.

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - First up, the zone plan we've been talking about and the time lines. Associated with that process is an environmental impact statement and an environmental management plan that goes along with it in a sequential fashion and they're very much tied in with it, so those are the sorts of processes that could slow the final outcome of the zone plan. Having said that, there is public consultation with those two processes as well.

Coming back to Mrs Napier's question, what would be the impact if you put a two-lane highway into Dove Lake? One, the implication is that it would raise serious concerns of that sort of road going into a World Heritage Area. I am quite certain that it would

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

constitute the need for a major pathway and there are lots of implications and processes that are involved there and one of them is a ministerial council which is David Llewellyn and the minister for Environment Australia, as well as another local representative.

Mrs NAPIER - Could you comment about a two-lane road?

Mr CARMAN-BROWN - Yes. Because of that representation there would be a need to go through the major pathway but there would also be a likely call - within the last year there's been a new act come out, the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act which requires that we refer things to them in World Heritage areas and they make a determination whether they want to control the process of assessment. They would, I believe, take very serious adding this extra disturbance to the World Heritage Area. Not only in a double highway but also putting alongside the road further service mains and that would constitute further disturbance. I believe that the proof of the determination already made by Environment Australia with regards to the road upgrading would need to be reconsidered.

Mrs NAPIER - I think it is extremely important to get that on the record because we are going to have a lot of ordinary people out there saying, 'You're spending all this money, why haven't you made it two lanes at least?' Was consideration given, however, of the use of speed cameras and just improving the indications where you were going from the current two-lane sections to one-lane sections rather than creating additional one-lane sections. I must admit, the idea of reducing two lanes of road to one of road to me is an anathema, if I can find another way to slow people down and save the animals.

Mr NEVARD - Can I answer you with - unfortunately I tend to give slightly long answers so bear with me but hopefully this will do that. In changing from two lanes to one we are not doing something which is not happening in a lot of other places, that is the first point. So we are not breaking new ground here. We may be doing it in relation to this road but certainly a project which I was involved in recently in far North Queensland in Kuranda does precisely that, it removes carriageway widths. It is in an urban situation in order to slow traffic down and give precedence to pedestrians. We are doing much the same, we are slowing traffic down to give precedence to the environment - wildlife in the broader sense. So we are not doing something that is not recognised, that is the first thing, and is not part of the normal tackle of traffic calming that goes on all over the place.

The second thing is that we tried to - I remember it was Jane Foley who was quite strong on this from Tourism Tasmania's point of view and she said she was representing an industry view and she brought to the meeting very much a tourism industry's view of this - they wanted to make sure, and she pointed to this wilderness, the feel of wilderness was retained on this road, and therefore if it was at all possible to achieve traffic calming without signage and still retain obviously the safety issues then that's what we should try to do so that's what we have set out to do.

Now, Milan Prodanovic of DIER - he is the senior traffic engineer - is not known for his flexibility - so to get this through his safety audit we were honestly not confident that it would because it is not in the normal course of what you would do on a road of this nature. However, to our pleasure and surprise they believed the fact that we were changing the geometry of the road, which the essence of the point is, by making sure the

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

people had a perception that it's one lane with passing bays rather than two lanes with narrow bits because there is a fundamental difference between those two.

In addition to my Australian family, I have an Irish one because my family come from Cork Island and most of the roads in West Cork are single lane with passing bays and the Irish understand -

CHAIR - I have driven around them. My great grandfather came from Cork.

Mr NEVARD - Notwithstanding my family's predilection for the whisky and Murphy's, they still navigate around those roads with remarkably few deaths, so I guess it is the art of the possible. I know we are asking you to bear with us and I guess my way around that was to put some belt and braces on those logistics of traffic management which you were concerned about and those safety issues which I think you are concerned about. The cost issue - and I would stand by this, and I thought about this when Leigh was giving his answer and added to it as a result of that - I think we are coming up with a low-cost option, full stop. So we are able - and it's rare - to manage to put in place environmental sensitivity with road safety at a low cost and that's because we have put a huge amount of thought into it.

CHAIR - Right. Thank you very much. Are there any further questions of the witnesses at the table? Thank you very much, gentlemen. We appreciate your help and the time you have given us and if you would care to retire or you may remain here. Mr Stendrup wishes to give evidence and then I would like to give the members of the department the opportunity, if they want to, to give any further evidence on any other aspect.

RODNEY STENDRUP, RESORT GENERAL MANAGER, CRADLE MOUNTAIN LODGE, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

Mr STENDRUP - Just briefly, with regard to the road, our simplistic view is that the road is adequate as it is with the improvements that have been made since February and we believe that, had they been prior to that, the incident would not have occurred. The gravel situation is two-fold, we think, again from our simplistic view, a minor safety issue from the point of view of people skidding, but more importantly it is important from an environmental point of view, as we understand, from the spread of gravel et cetera and the dust that really is quite nasty at this time of the year and spreads quite a long way into the bush. So from a wider perspective we are a bit more concerned about the road developments as talked about this afternoon, should they become a catalyst to introducing a shuttle bus service to limit the use of the road. Ourselves, plus other accommodation houses in the area, and now Doherty Hotels, which has been very warmly embraced by the department and government as new developers on the site, have significant investment here and we'd be concerned if a shuttle bus service was to be entered into without due consideration to what our people come here to enjoy and their ability to enjoy the area. I have heard words this afternoon that it is inevitable, that it is going to happen, that it must happen, and that does cause me some concern, probably more from a commercial point of view than anything else. With the restrictions on the

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

road with the passing bays et cetera that we are talking about, I think that may well be a catalyst to causing that to happen sooner rather than later, and I'm not sure that that is not going to have a strong detrimental effect on people's ability to access Dove Lake and the Cradle Mountain National Park.

They are the main concerns we have. I guess we are dealing with two types of visitors as we see it. There are those who commit quite heavily to the area and come and stay here, and we have some people come to stay with us for 10 or 12 days and probably come 2 or 3 times a year. We have other people who only come for one night, and the majority of them are only one or two nights. Nearly all of those people would access Dove Lake at some stage. Some of them go with our shuttle service that we operate ourselves, not a shuttle service but a guided tour. We have three vehicles here and we have three interpretation guides here and we run everything from canoeing on Dove Lake through to summit walks et cetera, so every day we are backwards and forwards there. I understand from reading the Cradle Valley plan that there is talk about enabling those sorts of things to continue if the shuttle bus service was introduced. However, that only caters for something like about 30 people here, and in peak times we could have up to 300 people. So they have breakfast, they move into the park at all sorts of times, they go on all lengths of walks. So I think the shuttle bus service is really very, very critical and it has to be considered at enormous length before it is introduced, because it can have a lot of ramifications, not only for us locally here but for tourism generally in the State of Tasmania.

The other point I would like to raise is the walking track that is being talked about also to Dove Lake from here. I agree with what has been said that really the only reason you would build it would be to provide access to the services. There is a slight benefit. We travel the road a lot and there are people who walk the road. It is certainly dangerous to be a pedestrian on that road, and in fact walking back along the canyon track which comes out about half a kilometre or so up the road you have to be very careful with traffic on the road. So there are some safety benefits in a separate walking track being built, but I believe it would have minimal use, but bringing the services into and out of the park is certainly an advantage.

That is pretty much all we have on it. We are concerned. We would like to see the road bitumen. We believe that the road is adequate if people drive carefully. How you do that is the issue that everyone has talked about. We also think the traffic management is probably the biggest area of concern on the road. Thank you.

Mrs NAPIER - Could I ask a question in relation to tourism? What percentage of people that are visiting the park who come in contact with you are fly/drive people?

Mr STENDRUP - Probably we are no different to the rest of the State. A very high percentage of our market is fly/drive. I would say probably about 60 to 70 per cent of our market would be fly/drive into here. The bus market itself, whilst the group numbers have grown a little bit this year compared to last year, the actual numbers in each group have deteriorated. We have had quite a lot of cancellations in the November-December part of it, but it is tending to look a little bit brighter through January and February. The bus market generally work with Dennis Maxwell and he picks them up from here and takes them in for a quick look and out again, so there is that side of it. The international

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

market is round about 21 per cent of our business and that is nearly all flying, most of it to drive as well. The majority of people either come in their own cars or in hire cars.

Mrs NAPIER - What feedback do they provide you with about the state of the road?

Mr STENDRUP - It doesn't seem to be of concern to them. We get very little negative comment about the road. I think the access is the thing. We get an odd comment about people being quite shocked that they have to pay an entry fee, but we can handle that without any trouble at all. So, no, they are in a wilderness area and I think they expect it to be a wilderness track, so the state of the road doesn't cause a great deal of concern for them.

Mr KONS - It's part of the experience.

Mr STENDRUP - Yes.

CHAIR - You have said you would prefer to see it left as it is, but you probably heard in the evidence while you have been here that there is a concern environmentally about the gravel spilling over onto the vegetation and the dust on the vegetation. You have heard the proposal involving a series of double width sections and then single and double - and you may have heard that Mr Firth counted up 67 different changes - do you have any views about the question of safety with that design, as you know this road very well?

Mr STENDRUP - I think it is more impacted by speed than anything else. I think you do get people who get quite concerned and they tend to be looking around. I think this area going up the road here is a classic example of where there are give-way signs for people coming this way. There is no way in the world I would drive from here to the airport without slowing down and offering people coming the other way the option of coming first, because -

CHAIR - You believe the right-of-way is something that is given to you, and if it is not given to you you don't have it.

Mr STENDRUP - That's exactly right, and it seems to me that they don't even see it. They're coming down the hill, they seem to be looking at you and they just drive straight past the give-way sign and before you know it they are into the narrow area. I think it may well be different in that area, but I'm sure you will still get cases where there will be one, two or three cars going one way and there will be someone come the other way, but I think that is inevitable whenever you get a single-lane section. Certainly I haven't counted them, but because there are many options, even in the narrow sections, to keep going until you are quite close to someone now, with the plan as it is, it would appear to me that it would slow down the movement of traffic in and out of Dove Lake. I guess in simplistic terms, if you were talking 100 cars were capable of doing it now in a hour, I think maybe you might cut that back to about 60 or something like that. That would be my thoughts on it because of the number of times they would have to stop and then wait and, just as quite often happens, someone is just about through the section and then another car comes, so it is not a matter of two or three coming through at one time. You could in theory be stuck there for half an hour just waiting for them, depending on the length -

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Mr Stendrup, and thank you for having us here. A very pleasant meeting room.

Would anybody else like to give evidence, whether they've given it before or make any comments? Now is the opportunity if anybody wants to take that.

Mr KONS - I have a question, Mr Chairman, of one of the previous witnesses. We heard that there were 67 opportunities to stop in this proposal. I am just wondering how many were there before?

Mr BARRETT - I haven't counted how many single-lane sections there are at present, but I can certainly get that information for you.

Mr KONS - If there's 67, it appears that there's one every hundred metres, and I'm just trying to work out that from a standing start in a vehicle in 100 metres how fast it can get up to.

Mrs NAPIER - And how many cars can pack into 100 metres.

Mr BARRETT - In 100 metres we could take an average car length if they queued up, with seven or eight metres spacing you would get somewhere like 15 or 16 cars per 100 metres. That's just queuing them.

Mrs NAPIER - What evidence do you have that we need as many sections of two lane and one-lane sections? I could see the rationale for why they were chosen, and so on, and it was suggested that that was to encourage people to be doing a constant low speed. But if, as I think we anticipate, at peak times there is likely to be a great deal of stopping and starting, banking up, and so on, it just sounds to me as if it is going to take a long time to get through that road and people do silly things sometimes when they sick of it, and queue jump and try to tag onto one another, and hold people back, and so on. Do we need that many sections of it? Can we not cut them in half and have 30 one-lane sections to at least get the message through that this road has been designed to slow people down quite deliberately, but you don't have to do it in such a strict engineering sense. I don't know if I've explained that very well, but is part of it about perceptions and getting the message across that you have to go slowly? There are quite a number of one-lane sections and it's quite deliberately been done that way to make you slow down and to save the animals and to make it safe. Why couldn't we reduce the number of one-lane sections we've got, have more two lane but just do it every so often if that slows them down?

Mr KONS - Before you answer that, I'd just like to interrupt. The proposal is for 60, the suggestion is why can't we reduce it and make it more dual lane, dual road going through because it would be much easier to add a structure afterwards to reduce the number of -

Mrs NAPIER - If you found it difficult to stop where people were speeding.

Mr KONS - if you've created the 67 breaks all over the road, it's much harder to pull that out if you found that it doesn't work.

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr BARRETT - If we pulled out those single-lane sections and converted them back to two-lane sections in the design where they ... two lane, I do not believe we would actually reduce the number of one-lane sections substantially.

Mrs NAPIER - If we take out the creek through to the Dove Lake we'd be able to deal with that separately from the original road through the creek.

Mr NEVARD - I've just taken some instructions from my client because to answer your question I am going to say we don't know -

Mrs NAPIER - That's a politician's answer.

Mr NEVARD - but we can do a little bit of extra work on modelling it because our client is prepared to allow some modelling to be done which would answer your concern but would also allow us to put in and take out sections of road to see the effect that they would have on speed - in my term, speed equals safety, they're the same thing - and trafficability, which is what I think you are mainly concerned about. I just went over to Mr Todd and said, 'Can I offer that to the committee as something that would help answer your question in a definitive way?' What we have done to date is to use the physical configuration of what we have to come up with the design rather than having it be driven by a computer so, if you like, the physical nature of the place and the human intuition, which is usually right, has been used. We can test that against a more rigorous mathematical type of approach; that is possible and that is essentially what we can offer if that helps the committee.

Mrs NAPIER - It seemed to me when we were going in the bus that there were some sections where we were overdoing it. All right, I might do it once to slow people down but I don't know that I have to do it all the time.

Mr GREEN - Earlier on you mentioned that you were going to ask how long it would take. We've got to make a decision very shortly about it, obviously we're going to adjourn this for a little while, and I would like it to be as short a period of time as possible. What sort of time frame are we looking at here?

Mr BARRETT - To carry this analysis.

Mr NEVARD - Model; a simple model to begin with.

Mr BARRETT - I think we could be looking at very possibly several weeks, maybe a fortnight, to collect the information and to analyse it.

Mr GREEN - My understanding from the Parks people that are here, is a lot of the data already has been collected and it is a matter of them getting that to you in terms of numbers, and so on.

Mr NEVARD - We have to set up a model, though, a rigorous model, and that does take a little bit of time.

Mr GREEN - Let me put it another way, then. In terms of the time frame for you to get your work under way this year, where does the window close?

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

Mr NEVARD - Today.

Mr GREEN - Today.

Mr NEVARD - It's very tight because we have to let a contract et cetera.

Mr TODD - Mr Chairman, perhaps if could answer that question. Yes, we have assessed tenders and we would hope, and it has been our hope, to proceed with the work and award a contract next month and work would commence very shortly thereafter. The nature of the work is that the work would happen very quickly because of the method that's used. I'm not sure of the exact production rates but it could be several hundred metres per day, so it would be done very quickly, but the problem is if we delay it we certainly get into the winter months and then it really becomes difficult to operate.

CHAIR - Can I say that on page 7 of the submission the key dates are, advertise the tender mid-November, close the tender late December. It's now late January, to award the contract mid-February. On the basis of everything being a bit delayed already, I would have thought you were probably looking at the end of February, aren't you? Surely adequate time for the modelling if a concerted effort is made.

Mr NEVARD - I think to answer your question, yes, time for the modelling but not necessarily in time for you to form an opinion on it.

CHAIR - If the committee decides - and the committee will have to consider this - if we decide to adjourn to enable this to happen or for any other reason and, when we resume, the committee I would expect would in all probability make a decision fairly quickly one way or the other from the date of resumption.

Mr NEVARD - We've operated to date this particular piece of work on time and within budget but we don't have a budget to do this so the department may have a view.

CHAIR - Have you on time - closed tender late December? What happened today?

Mr SCHINKEL - We have assessed tenders and we would award the contract as soon as - sorry, we would send it to the tenders board with a recommendation.

CHAIR - So they closed late December?

Mr SCHINKEL - That process has all happened.

CHAIR - And, as you mentioned earlier, the committee has cooperated with you to enable the tenders to be called beforehand and we always want to cooperate as much as possible in these things but, as you can see, there is some concern by some members about aspects of this. So awarding the contract mid February, that is about two and a half weeks from now, in any event. What is the earliest do you think you can have this extra information for us and, as Mr Cordiner was saying, to consult with witnesses who have given evidence today expressing concern and trying to accommodate those concerns?

Mr NEVARD - It is really those three pieces of work I wrote down: the logistics of traffic management, including the latest forecast and incorporating the latest traffic movements;

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

the issue of safety and liaison with people who have given evidence on the design, so there are those three elements. The first two essentially are mechanical in nature and going through them reviewing them. The latter is going to take a little bit of time, going back to people, taking them through the design process. Some of them also are, 'Yes, now I understand' because I believe they will, but that takes time to get to that point so that's why I am being cautious about saying a month -

CHAIR - A month? So that involves a delay of only -

Mr NEVARD - Two weeks.

CHAIR - two weeks maximum.

Mr NEVARD - Assuming your decision is pretty instant after that. That's why I was cautious about it.

CHAIR - Yes. Thank you. Any further questions?

Mrs NAPIER - This is probably very logically answered but once the modelling has been done and taking into account - I guess the question I am asking if it was decided that yes, there were some sections in it you could increase the retention of the two lanes, would you also run it over there physically to have - I mean, as you say, sometimes there are more logical places to make changes than otherwise.

Mr NEVARD - I would certainly visit the site and test it.

Mrs NAPIER - I assumed you would, but I thought I had better ask the question just in case.

Mr NEVARD - Coming back to this and I know this is not stunningly robust in the context of the parliamentary standing committee but one's intuition in these matters I trust actually, how it feels on site, how it looks on site is quite important and that would be an important -

Mrs NAPIER - You are dealing with pretty pragmatic people here.

Mr NEVARD - I would think it was quite an important thing to do. It may look okay on the computer but it may not work on the ground.

CHAIR - All right. Thank you. Thank you very much gentlemen. If anybody else wanted to give evidence, now is the opportunity because we have one or two written submissions to take into evidence. It looks as if we will not be sitting tomorrow, so does anybody else want to give any further evidence.

Thank you all for the help that you have each given and the interest you have shown today.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.