

# PUBLIC

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET IN  
COMMITTEE ROOM 1, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON MONDAY  
17 October 2022

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## HUON LINK ROAD PROJECT

Mr DAVID PECK, PROJECT CLIENT, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH,  
Mr CRAIG TARBOTTON, PROJECT MANAGER, DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
GROWTH, AND Mr GARY HICKS, PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM LEADER,  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY  
DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** - Welcome everybody to this Public Works Committee hearing on the Huon Link Road. I wish to welcome any members of the public who are listening in today to these proceedings. I will start by introducing the members who are part of the committee, John Tucker, Tanya Rattray, Rob Valentine, Jen Butler and Simon Wood and our secretary Scott Hennessey and we have Henry on *Hansard* today.

I will make you aware of committee proceedings in case you have not been to one of these hearings before. The committee is pleased to hear your evidence today and thank you for the site tour today. It was important for us to get that overall impression as to what the project is about and to see it in situ.

Before you give evidence today, I will inform you of some of the important aspects of committee proceedings. The committee hearing is a proceeding in parliament and this means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege. This is an important legal protection that allows individuals giving evidence to a parliamentary committee to speak with complete freedom without the fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place out of parliament. It applies to ensure that parliament receives the very best information when conducting its inquiries.

It is important to be aware this protection is not accorded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside the confines of the parliamentary proceedings. This is a public hearing. Members of the public and journalists may be present and this means your evidence may be reported. Do you understand? I need a clear yes.

**Witnesses** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Would you like to make an opening statement on the project?

**Mr PECK** - I will be happy to. A quick overview of why we are putting up this road for consideration. The Huon Valley Council approached the State Government seeking support to construct a new road around the eastern side of the Huonville township.

The State Government is supportive of the project and has committed \$15.8 million in funding towards the project. The project will also receive \$13.2 million of co-funding from the Australian Government.

The project objective we are trying to achieve is to divert Hobart to Cygnet traffic from the existing Channel Highway/Huon Highway intersection on the Esplanade and Main Street,

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Huonville by developing a link road that will directly connect the Channel Highway south of Huonville at Flood Road to the Huon Highway north of Huonville.

Some of the key benefits we are trying to achieve as outcomes from this project are providing a safer and improved alignment for the Channel Highway while also removing through traffic from the Huonville town centre. This will improve the ambience of the town centre and reduce congestion during peak periods, improve pedestrian and cyclist safety and reduce noise and vibration through the township.

The new greenfield alignment will also provide enhanced access and promote development in and around Huonville.

**CHAIR** - Are there any further comments? Thank you very much.

We normally work our way through the submission page by page so we do not miss anything and members will ask relevant questions in relation to that.

We also received a submission from members of the public, the Circular Economy Huon.

The reason we cannot make those available upfront is because they are not passed by the committee for debate, but they just have been and are there for your information.

I want to start out with an understanding. You mentioned the Huon Council and I am interested to know how much interaction there was with the council in relation to this, especially in relation to the strategic planning the council does. It may well be something that has happened over a number of years, but if you could fully describe your interactions with the council in relation to this particular project, especially because this land was within the jurisdiction of the Huon Council and obviously interacts with the community they represent.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - I can certainly talk on behalf of the project. The project that has been presented today represents the last two years of the life of this road. Prior to the project there were earlier discussions with council which I am not privy to.

Since the project started - approximately two years ago when we inherited it from the council, we have kept council via one of their staff, Lachlan Kranz, as closely informed as we can through our consultant. Our design consultant, Burbury Consulting, engage ERA Planning and Environment as stakeholder specialists and they consult with all stakeholders. The council is a key stakeholder and our very first meeting of the project involved the council as key stakeholder. Throughout that previous two years we have kept council fully informed about the project.

A lot of what the project is to develop, and key facets of what the project is delivering are council's requirements or desires, which includes a shared path. The council decides that, connectivity to the Skinners Creek pathway was a desire. Indeed, the alignment was a council preference too, the northern alignment that we've chosen. So, all along the project implementation delivery path lifecycle, we have kept council as fully informed as we could.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, and they see it as keying in with their desires. Are they very supportive?

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**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes, I think in support of that the position that the new highway has taken - so we are here to talk about what we are internally calling the northern route, generically it's the Huon Link Road but it's the northern route of two options that were assessed. That route sits within a zone of land that council identified as a road corridor on their planning scheme. So, we have positioned a road on a piece of land that they had already hoped would be developed for a road, for a future bypass. So yes, council is fully informed, fully aware and supportive of the project.

**CHAIR** - The current flooding that's occurring in the north of the State, is that one of the principal reasons for this in terms of council's desire to have this road built to avoid the flooding at the Esplanade? I would think that would be the case but can you confirm that is what it is about?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - It's not the principal driver for the project. It is a consideration and an aspect that we have considered. Flood Road, as the name implies, was developed to avoid floods in the event the Huon River floods. Our project is not to avoid that and we do not necessarily change the alignment of the flood road. It was not a primary driver for the project but we have considered how our road or the highway will perform under floods.

We have undertaken extensive flood modelling, in fact our design consultant undertook their own flood modelling. They engaged a separate independent person, organisation, to review their flood modelling and the outcome is that this project does not worsen or exacerbate the current situation. A lot of the land in question is mapped as flood prone, not necessarily at the southern end of Flood Road, perhaps further north, the northern tip of Flood Road. We took that into account when designing our project. All our hydrological studies, our storm weather modelling shows that we do not exacerbate that situation.

Storming and flooding will still likely occur under those extreme events, and we are talking greater than one in one hundred events. We design our road products for one in one hundred depending on the capacity and the category of the road, but as a highway we design it for one in one hundred-year events and our modelling indicates that we have not worsened our situation.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, any other members who wish to ask questions under this 1.4, Related projects and strategic context?

**MS BUTLER** - Going back to the potential flooding that may occur on the new highway, there are two bridges, I believe, that are part of that. Can you run us through whether those bridges are built to a hundred-year standard, and some of the work that has gone into ensuring those bridges will be fit for a purpose?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - So yes, they are designed for what we call a one in one hundred-year event or 1 per cent probability of occurrence. There are two bridge structures, one is new and one is the existing one on Flood Road which we will be upgrading, widening.

**Ms RATTRAY** - But they are not technically a bridge, are they?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - We call them a bridge.

**Ms RATTRAY** - But they are not technically a bridge?

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**Mr TARBOTTON** - They are not a bridge over a river.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I must have misheard at the site, sorry.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - We classify them as a bridge.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Even though they are big culverts?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - So yes, they are designed for one in one hundred-year events, and again what drives that modelling and that design is the category of the road, the State highway, that drives that modelling. So, one in one hundred years is what it will be immune to - and I have forgotten the question.

**Ms BUTLER** - Some of the technical work that the department has undertaken or a consultant has undertaken should ensure those bridges are fit for purpose?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - All of our designs are designed in accordance with a number of guidelines. Our roadworks are designed in accordance with Austroads, which is a national guideline. Bridge structures are designed in accordance with a national standard. The Australian Standard of 50-100 that will govern the design of the bridge as far as the immunity of that structure to flooding, that's our flood modelling. Again, it has to withstand a one in one hundred-year flood event and this one will withstand that.

**Ms BUTLER** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - It is not an insignificant catchment coming down into that, is it?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - No, it is quite large. Correct.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Was a larger bridge construction considered or was it decided that because it met the one in one hundred-year flood event, that these would be suitable?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Correct. The designs have to be appropriate and fit for purpose. We quite often use box culverts or large concrete culverts for bridge structures. They are cost effective.

**Ms RATTRAY** - You just bang them in, don't you? You don't build them on site anymore.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Correct. Part of it is built in situ, but we do bring them in, yes.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That is my local government background. Just bang them in.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - The box culverts are a common form of what we call bridge structure.

**Ms RATTRAY** - It has been suggested that the modelling has not been done for the destination of vehicles for this project. We know how many vehicles - there are plenty of 'geo-counts' I think they are referred to - relating to the average number of vehicles on the roads.

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Could you walk me through why that data was not collected? I am interested to have that understanding, or if it is even necessary?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Our road projects all evaluate traffic flows. We do that so that we can understand what category of road we need to design for, and the scale of the road itself. Our traffic surveys identify where vehicles are heading to - the broad destination - where they stop, and where they turn. Whilst we cannot categorically tell you that the vehicles travelling north will go to Hobart, we know that they are travelling north of Huonville and we can identify the volume of that traffic that travels north of Huonville. We can identify the volume of traffic that turns south at the Huon Bridge and heads further south. We cannot tell you where they go beyond the bridge, but we know that they turn left and travel south.

That information tells us the split of the traffic. We know the traffic coming from Cygnet along the Channel Highway. We know how much travels north and how much goes south. We can also determine how much stays in Huonville based on the volume of traffic that leaves Cygnet. We know how much is travelling south, how much is travelling north with the balance staying in Huonville. So, that of itself is a form of destination survey. It is not a specific destination survey. It is more the traffic volume so we understand traffic movements.

**CHAIR** - So, a lot of the traffic could be going, at the moment, via the Huonville main road or call it the CBD if you like, it is pretty busy. They might have a temporary stop there to get coffee or fuel or whatever, and then travel to Hobart.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - You are not able to refine it any lower than that, to be able to say exactly how many vehicles are likely to use this particular road, and bypass Huonville altogether?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - I will take that on notice. We have forecast the number of vehicles that will use this Huon Link Road, the proposed road. We have forecast the percentage of vehicle drops, what the traffic volume will reduce along the main road.

**CHAIR** - Then how can you forecast that - and this is a genuine question - without really having the origin destination survey to know whether large trucks are currently going up the Esplanade and doing a right into Huon Road? Yes, they are large trucks and they do not have many places to stop, but they may be stopping on a side street, for instance going towards Ranelagh, going back getting their early morning coffee or their lunch or whatever they might want to buy, and then continuing on. How do you know the nature of the traffic that is actually utilising the strip in Huon Road?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - We will put traffic counters at key points along all of the major highways associated with this project. Traffic counters were positioned further north of where we intersect with the Huon Highway - that is north of Orchard Avenue. That will tell us the volume and type of traffic.

**CHAIR** - And the weight?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Correct. It is typically split between heavy vehicles, regardless of their weight - which is heavy - and standard vehicles, so we know the split and we know the volume - the number of vehicles - that travel beyond Orchard. We also know the same

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characteristics of vehicles travelling south. But, you are correct - if I can give you an example. If 20 000 vehicles are travelling along the channel from Cygnet, 5000 turn south to go south and only 10 000 travel north of Orchard Avenue. That leaves a balance of 5000. They may stay in Huonville, or they may go to other destinations, which we don't put traffic counters on, because they're not associated with this. That is the request I'm hearing, that you'd like us to do that type of destination survey - but we don't.

**Mr VALENTINE** - Okay; but you can deduce what is likely to be staying in Huonville as opposed to those likely to use this road.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - That's a traffic count, they're actual statistics, they're values. We forecast, because we know what the population growth is and we use -

**Ms Rattray** - About 3 per cent per annum, is that it?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes, it can be up to that, yes. It depends on the region, of course, as well.

**Ms BUTLER** - I know it wasn't part of the scope of this project, but has there been any work done on whether the new bypass will improve travel times for people who don't have to access the main road?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Correct.

**Ms BUTLER** - Has there been work and data around that?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes, yes. Our primary consultant engaged a traffic specialist to undertake that survey and that modelling and it has been determined that there will be travel time efficiencies gained, as a result of the highway. The gains are primarily due, for a few reasons, to the increased speed along the new highway. The greenfield section of the highway will be 80kms per hour, so it's time gained in that. Because you are not travelling to the main centre of Huonville you pick up time, or gain time, due to the lack of congestion, or avoiding that congestion. And, of course, trying to turn onto the Huon Highway, at the bridge, you gain time by not having that manoeuvre. There are travel time efficiencies to be obtained, or gained. They are normally measured in seconds. They are not large timing increases, but as far as travel time for vehicles, we typically measure them in seconds and we are obtaining those travel time efficiencies.

**Ms BUTLER** - Are there different times of the day where greater efficiencies would be felt? I gather that when you're not having that big block down - when you come off the bridge, near the hotel, when you turn tight off the Esplanade, I imagine that would all bank back in normal traffic conditions. Can you run through what it looks like the moment, for the record, at, say, peak hour times?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - I don't have those that data -

**Mr PECK** - Certainly in the study here in the Huonville bypass traffic modelling and concept liability, the study that was done.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Do you want actual time values, time gains?

**Ms BUTLER** - Just delay, and a rough indication of what it looks like at the moment, to be able to do a comparison of how it will look in the future, once the bypass is complete - and especially in relation to those peak times where that main congestion is around.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - The traffic survey, the traffic modelling, at the moment identifies that the Huon Link Road will remove approximately 3000 vehicles per day from the main street of Huonville. Those 3000 additional vehicles will move to the Huon Link Road. Back to your times of the day when the travel time - efficiencies or gains will be the greatest - normally your a.m. and p.m. peaks, because it's the slowest along there. During the middle parts of the day, or outside those a.m. and p.m. peaks, the travel time efficiencies will be reduced because it is free-flowing. I cannot quantify for you; I can get that information to you what the travel time gains are, at a.m. and p.m. -

**Ms BUTLER** - That would be great if you could, at a later stage. It's more curiosity than anything else, but I think it would speak to the merits of the project to be able to compare the 'now' to the projection. I think that would be important.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Under 2.1, where it's talking about 'problem and opportunity statement,' it talks about the Huon Valley Council's 2019 Huonville Raneleigh Master Plan. One of the dot points says:

Huonville is currently a township that people pass through. People need to be encouraged to stop.

The next dot point says:

Quote

The majority who provided feedback thought it was more desirable not to bring traffic through Huonville.

In my view, this is a bit in conflict. You either want them to stop, or you don't want them there; or is it that you want only a certain type of traffic to stop? Is that what is meant with that feedback from that study?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes. That is a summary of the input from the general public.

My interpretation of that is that the general public would like vehicles to stop in the centre of town to improve business viability. At the same time, they would like the heavy vehicles - the vehicles which are simply going to Cygnet, and not stopping - to be removed from the centre of town so those other vehicles - destination type vehicles - can stop with comfort and safety.

**Ms RATTRAY** - You didn't spell out the type of vehicle that the heavy vehicles are. I expect that they are customers as well, so it is always a bit of a difficult one that one, isn't it?

Also, a question around the council's Master Plan for this area. It's been suggested that because there hasn't been an actual Master Plan, or a current one, undertaken and approved by the Council, then this is a bit of the 'cart before the horse'. So, just some comments around that, if I might?

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**Mr TARBOTTON** - I would disagree that it is the 'cart before the horse'. This project, this alignment, if you like, has been discussed before the council for many years, well before my time. We are developing a State highway. We have certain goals that we wish to achieve. Those goals are traffic safety, travel time efficiencies, which we will achieve.

The council does have plans for the greater Huonville region. Just at the moment, they don't have a specific plan that relates to the land between the new highway and the town centre.

We are going to work with council when they start to develop that plan to make sure that our State highway can, or will not, prevent the further or future development of Huonville and that the two can work in concert.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I also asked the question on site about access on and off the new highway. It was suggested that there will not be multiple access points anywhere, because this is obviously going to be an area that in the future, I expect, looking at the growth of where we were standing today, that eventually those housing subdivisions will push out further, in and around the highway.

Can you talk me through how that is going to occur and what sort of conversations will be needed with council, in the future, as they are designing their subdivisions, or developers, with council, about the on-and-off opportunities of the proposed bypass highway?

**Mr TARBOTTON** – Those discussions typically start with a comment such as:

We would like to talk to you about how you are going to plan for the future development of the township.

That will then initiate further discussions.

We have raised this matter with council, and we will then progress those discussions. Those discussions have not occurred in detail yet. They will occur, and I can't tell you what time, but they will occur.

Typically, what would happen is that council would identify how they foresee this land being used. At the moment, the land between the highway and Huonville is not all zoned general residential.

If the council does want that land to be developed into residential subdivisions, it has to be rezoned, and that is a discussion within council. Of course, there have to be the developers there who wish to develop the land, so again, that is a discussion between council and private developers, not State Growth, or the State Government.

Once the council has identified that they desire this land to be used for residential purposes, and there are property developers willing to apply for rezoning, or the council rezone it themselves, then they can come to State Growth and ask us, how can we - council - connect into your highway? We want that conversation to occur. We're not here to prevent the development of Huonville but we are here to ensure that our State highway does perform as a State highway. There is a lot of money, as you know, going into this project and we cannot afford that highway to function at a lower level than a State highway.

The format of that discussion will be council identifying that they do want to develop the land. They might prepare their own master plan showing how they see the land being developed, in the lot configuration that they see best, and then approach us and talk to State Growth as a road authority as to where we can position junction points.

**Ms RATTRAY** - What I am taking from what you are saying is that this could be a long time down the track, so it is State Growth's focus on putting something in place for what is there now and not necessarily looking at the future needs of the Huonville broader community at this point in time? Is that fair?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes and no. It would be imprudent of us to position a junction point now not knowing how that land will be developed. We could put a junction there now and if it does not suit or work in concept with the land developers, it could work against the land developers to their detriment. We do not want that and they do not want that. So, the most pragmatic approach is to build a State highway, allow future connection to that in a controlled manner and the way that we control it is through a discussion with council.

**Ms RATTRAY** - How difficult is it to put access points, and I am assuming it is probably only going to be one or perhaps two, how difficult is it to put those access points into a State highway after the event, after it has been established? Is that something that is not necessarily an issue?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - No, it's not. It's not a concern from an engineering perspective, it is standard business for us. From a cost perspective it is not that onerous to do it retrospectively.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Well, the State does not pay. It would be the developer, wouldn't it?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - It can be, yes, correct, quite often that is the case. As far as the positioning of it, there are no constraints as to where it could be positioned. Along the full length of the highway there is a possibility for a junction to be placed anywhere along that land. There are some locations better than others.

**CHAIR** - A fundamental question: there are quite a few people these days who might say, well, you built more roads you are basically creating extra capacity. People then simply use a car because they can, because it is easier to do so, as opposed to creating public transport offerings that reduce the number of people that use cars and, therefore, reduce the need for new highways like this.

I am looking for the balance here in terms of - from my own experience, it seems Huonville suffers from congestion at this point where the hotel is, just over the bridge or just before the bridge, depending on which way you are going, and an ingress onto the Huon Highway, which is quite a dangerous point. Is this to reduce the amount of traffic that actually flows through the main street without necessarily increasing the capacity of vehicles that ultimately use the Huon Highway? Is it primarily to steer cars away from the main street of Huonville as opposed to providing a better road that provides greater capacity?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes, both. At the moment, as we know, the main street through Huonville is congested and that of itself creates traffic hazards and safety issues. It is not just

the traffic travelling down through the main street which creates that. There is also that junction between the two highways.

**CHAIR** - It is not a good junction, I have to agree with that.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Heavy vehicles cannot use that so that compounds that issue. Our new highway has multiple goals. It takes away the highway traffic - that is, the traffic which is bound from either Hobart to Cygnet, through traffic which has no need to go through a town centre and should not be in the middle of a town, so it takes those vehicles away, improves safety.

At the same time, we are proposing a multi million-dollar road, so we have to ensure that the capacity of that has capacity for the future as population grows and so does vehicle volume increase. So, our new highway has the capacity for future population growth, greater volumes.

**CHAIR** - In what sense? It's still only a two-lane structure, it's not four, is it?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Correct. However, the free-flowing nature of a highway will allow more vehicles to travel along its length, hence the 80 km/h and the minimisation of junctions. The more free-flowing that highway can be allowed to operate under, the more traffic flow or volume that can pass through it.

**CHAIR** - That's an interesting intention. Other questions on this section? Okay.

**Mr TUCKER** - Just quickly, before we go, Chair. There are going to be three main access points along there with this piece of highway, the two roundabouts in the end there where Flood Road meets the Esplanade. That's correct?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes.

**Mr TUCKER** - That's a fair number of access points for that section of length of road. How long is the rest of the road? I'm just trying to think.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Three kilometres. They are not necessarily access points to the highway; they're junctioned with existing roads. Obviously, at the beginning of the Huon Highway, we junction with the Huon Highway and we junction with the Channel Highway at Flood Road. The roundabout at Knights Road is not necessarily junctioned to the highway. It just happens to be the confluence of four roads.

**Mr TUCKER** - Yes, but it is. It gives access to that 3 km, so basically every kilometre, you've got an access point there. I just wanted that on the record.

**CHAIR** - Just the last dot point, under 2.1 on that page: the *2021 Department of State Growth Huon Highway Corridor Study*, pending publication. Is there a reason why this project has been put forward now prior to that being published? Or do you know the contents of it and, therefore, can take any issues into account?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - That is a separate entire project to this project. At the time of submitting this document to the committee, that corridor study, the stakeholder consultation

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had not been finalised, consequently had not been publicised. But it is a separate project to this.

**CHAIR** - And it doesn't impact on this in any way? It's not likely to impact on this, is that what you're telling me?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - I don't know.

**Mr PECK** - I've reviewed it and there are no recommendations for this segment of road in that report.

**CHAIR** - Okay. I just thought it was a bit odd that -

**Ms RATTRAY** - Is that to do with the allocated \$29.2 million, that project? Whereas this one's only \$21 million?

**Mr PECK** - There is no allocation for the Huon Highway Corridor Strategy.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - It's a separate project but if I can just add to David's comment. That is a corridor strategy, a corridor study about how multiple roads could be potentially improved to improve the region. The project before you is one specific road; that is, the goal is to take traffic away from one section of existing road.

The budget you just mentioned, this project has a supported budget of \$29 million, which David mentioned earlier. That's the budget for this project. That's not to do with the corridor study. We are forecasting costs less than that \$29 million.

**CHAIR** - Okay.

**Ms RATTRAY** - So, you have \$29.2 million in the kitty but it will only cost \$21 million to do the works?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes, that cost estimate is preliminary cost estimate. When I say preliminary, it's a point-in-time cost estimate.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I know we're not there yet, Chair.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Correct. Our goal is to obviously deliver this project within the budget, within the \$29 million. That is an estimate to show you that we are targeting to bring it in under the \$29 million. We reserve access to the \$29 million because our cost estimates are not finalised yet. We're still finalising the project but we intend to bring it in under the \$29 million.

**CHAIR** - Okay. We'll move -

**Ms RATTRAY** - We'll get to there.

**CHAIR** - Yes, we will, as we go through.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I got ahead of myself, Chair.

**CHAIR** - No, that's okay. If things are linked, they are linked and you need to ask questions. That's what we are here for. Moving over the page, problems with the existing link. Traffic modelling done for the period 2019-29 showed that traffic volumes on Main Street are forecast to increase due to population growth. You have already covered that and mentioned that.

**Ms RATTRAY** - But it is at 3 per cent? The population growth at this point in time or around 3 per cent per annum?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - I'd have to take that on notice.

**CHAIR** - Despite the forecast increase in 2029 traffic volumes, it is still of note that the increase in traffic on Main Street is less substantial and the Huon link road is included in the modelling. This highlights how the bypass draws traffic from the eastern side of Huonville away. Approximately 4400 vehicles a day have been modelled using the Huon link road in 2029. That is the detail of what we were talking about earlier.

**Mr TUCKER** - With the problems with the existing link, we are putting this bypass around the back of Huonville. We would be reducing a number of crashes coming out of that corner where the bridge is, where the Esplanade meets the Huon Highway, but also making it safer for people when they are visiting those shops and hopping out of those vehicles, especially when heavy vehicles are going past. It is not an overly wide road. It's not like the Fingal Valley where there's a huge area through that main street. This will address those safety issues?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Correct. That is one of the primary goals for this project - to remove unnecessary vehicles from the town centre, thereby indirectly promoting it as a destination.

**Ms RATTRAY** - There is no line of sight as you come out of there, we tried it today. I just put my foot on it and went for it, didn't I, Jeff? There is absolutely no line of sight off that bridge. I couldn't see whether there was any oncoming.

**CHAIR** - On the fourth dot point, 'Reduction in average delay at Channel Highway/Huon Highway intersection compared to the 2029 model scenario', is that simply because one is a roundabout and the other is a T intersection?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Can you repeat that?

**CHAIR** - The construction of this project will provide a safer and more efficient trip for road users and it has a number of dot points. One of them is 'Reduction in average delay at Channel Highway/Huon Highway intersection compared to the 2029 model scenario'. Is that because we are dealing with a roundabout as opposed to a T junction, would that be the reason for that?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes. By diverting the traffic from that substandard junction, vehicles will still use that junction. Vehicles will still travel from Cygnet along the Esplanade and turn left if they want to go south. They will still have that junction, but there will be far fewer vehicles and there should, potentially, be far fewer heavy vehicles at that junction.

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**CHAIR** - Were you saying today that the council was trying to more pedestrianise that and make it a quieter space on the Esplanade between that junction and where it meets Flood Road?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - That is a council matter, so I cannot speak for the council. Once we transfer the Esplanade to council, it will become a council road and they can -

**CHAIR** - They can do whatever they wish with it. As you go along there you can see that there are a lot of parks and -

**Ms RATTRAY** - Playgrounds -

**CHAIR** - Eateries and all sorts of things.

**Ms RATTRAY** - This link road won't address the turning right once you get off the Esplanade? It still will not address the line of sight, turning right. That will be a council matter for the future?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes and no. The bridge is a State-owned asset, so the bridge is ours. The intention is for the number of vehicles stopping -

**Ms RATTRAY** - To be less -

**Mr TARBOTTON** - To be far less. No heavy vehicles, the heavy vehicles should use the Huon link road, the new link road. -

**Ms RATTRAY** - They might need to get fuel, they might need to -

**CHAIR** - They can still do that.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - If they wish to turn south towards Franklin, for example, south of the bridge, they can do that via the Huon link road. They can turn onto Sale Street, they will still travel down through Main Street but they will not be turning left at that junction. It will be on Main Street -

**Mr PECK** - At the roundabout where there are good sight lines.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - As a more controlled entrance to the Huon Highway for heavy vehicles. The predominant movement of heavy vehicles is from Cygnet in the south-east, through to north. Some do venture south. I can't give those percentages, unfortunately, but we do know they are minor in number. They can still travel along the Esplanade because we are not closing the Esplanade, it will not be our road to close. Even until it is a council road, we will not be closing it so vehicles can travel along it, including heavy vehicles, and they will still encounter that junction that you mentioned.

Once the road is transferred to council then the Esplanade becomes a council road.

**Ms RATTRAY** - And they might close it?

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**Mr TARBOTTON** - I cannot comment. This bridge, our bridge, we cannot reposition it.

**Ms RATTRAY** – But is there work that can be done on the bridge? Put some railings rather than a solid panel, because at the moment it is virtually a solid panel, you just cannot see through it.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - The Huon link road will address some of them to a large extent. While the Esplanade remains open to traffic, and that is the intent at the moment, then that hazard remains, but it would be far less hazardous due to fewer traffic lights.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Do we know how many crashes have been on the Esplanade junction?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - I have statistics for the main street, but not that junction.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Right, okay.

**CHAIR** - Yes, the main street ones are not insignificant, are they?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - I believe it is 152 over 10 years, but that is not at that junction.

**CHAIR** - There were 152 crashes reported.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - You have options evaluation under 2.2 between the southern route and the northern route. Could you describe why you chose the northern route so the people listening in can understand that.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - The project took to the public two options, we called them the southern route and the northern route. We wanted the public to express their preference as opposed to the State Government simply dictating or prescribing a solution. The project was initiated on a southern route only, but we wanted the public to express their opinion. We identified, in consultation with council, an alternative route, which we called the northern route. Public consultation occurred in the early part of this year and it closed around February or March.

The overwhelming response was support for the longer route. That also happens to be council's preferred route. From a transport engineering perspective there are benefits to be obtained by adopting the northern route. It exits that traffic further north away from the town centre.

South of Orchard Road, which is where the northern route joins into the Huon Highway, there is a portion of Huon Highway which has a higher crash rate than other sections along the Huon Highway. By adopting the northern route, which exits further north, we also avoid that. We send more traffic away from that section of the Huon Highway than if we were to adopt the southern route, which joined into the Huon Highway further south. Between where the southern route would have joined Huon and the northern, that section of Huon Highway is prone to traffic accidents, so there were benefits to adopting the northern route.

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**CHAIR** –Something that often comes up when you are dealing with alienation of agricultural land is the class of land that it is alienating under the Protection of Agricultural Land Act. Can you deal with that component with respect to the orchard that's being bisected?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes.

**Ms RATTRAY** - And why we can't have any of the apple trees?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - You probably can if you just approached a contractor at the time.

**Ms RATTRAY** - People will ask, they'll say, 'What a waste!'

**Mr TARBOTTON** - If I can just address the question.

**CHAIR** - Yes, thank you.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - To the orchard owner, it is currently a commercial operating orchard and we have been in close communication with that land owner since the implementation of the project two years ago. The orchard owner is in support of the project and they believe this will provide a positive outcome to the community, and we support that as well.

We cannot deliver this project without impacting land. If it wasn't the orchard land, it would have been prime residential land, and there is a balancing act about what land we affect. Is it agricultural land or is it residential land? The council supported the longer route, knowing that we would pass through an orchard. The orchard owner supported a northern route, knowing that we would pass through their land.

In discussions and communications with the orchard owner, they have made comment that they purchased this land in the 1980s knowing that Huonville would expand onto their boundaries at some point. It was only a matter of time, and that happens to be now. They are fully aware of that, and they have started to diversify their business to allow their business to continue operating, knowing that the land opposite Orchard Avenue will eventually be constrained by residential development.

**CHAIR** – So, the amount of compulsory acquisition for the two options - can you give us an understanding of what that might look like?

**Mr TARBOTTON** – As far as costs, or acreage?

**CHAIR** – Obviously costs are difficult, I imagine, but if you can give us costs by all means. I know with these things and negotiations, they're not always easy to settle on a full price; but can you give us an understanding of the quantum of the land being acquired on the northern one compared to what the southern route might be?

**Mr TARBOTTON** –The southern route has less impact on agricultural land. We do not pass through the orchard, so that's less there. The square meterage of acquisition is less on the southern route as a total quantum of acquisition. The cost of the acquisition - and I am not referring to compensation here, that is a matter for the Valuer-General to determine, not myself - but our estimates indicate that the cost of compensation between the two routes would

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be equivalent, based on the value of the land. Whilst the area of acquisition is less for the southern route, the value of that land is greater, being already zoned residential and planned residential.

**CHAIR** – Thank you. You have given me the answer. Further questions on that page?

**Ms BUTLER** – Has there been any consideration undertaken in relation to mitigating potential roadkill incidents along that highway? I notice there is quite dense bush land going on to that and it is something that we probably have not dealt with very well historically, in Tasmania. Could you run through some of those measures for me?

**Mr TARBOTTON** – That has been raised by our internal environmental unit and we are building into our road contract provisions, or requirements, for the road contractor to monitor any roadkill. At the moment, the flood road is the greatest risk because of that vegetation area.

The 60 kilometre per hour speed limit at the moment is a mitigation to that, because hopefully vehicles are travelling at a speed where they can avoid collision with animals. The project has not implemented any specific alternative mechanisms to reduce that. What we do want to understand is the frequency or the prevalence of animals on that road.

Within our contract, we are requiring our road contractor to monitor the presence of any animals on their site from that woodland. If they happen to impact one, then they must report it and must report the frequency of that. They are to ensure that their construction equipment does not leave the worksite, our road corridor, so they cannot travel through any of that woodland or private land where the animals may reside. We are hoping that they will provide us with more knowledge as to how our road contracts, our construction contracts, interact with animals.

Beyond the construction period, the road will still exist where it is now, slightly wider and it will still exist adjacent to a woodland. Our mitigation is the travel speed, the 60 kilometres per hour should be sufficient enough for the motorist to slow down.

**Ms RATTRAY** – A question regarding any matters relating to the Indigenous community. What assessment has been done? As we know, the Bridgewater Bridge has halted.

**CHAIR** - Brighton, prior to that.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - We have, via our consultants, engaged with Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania (AHT) to ensure that the Aboriginal community are aware of this project. They have been given an opportunity to communicate with us and have a dialogue with us regarding their concerns. No concerns have been raised. The survey undertaken by AHT identified no artefacts, so the risk is low. The community has not expressed any dissatisfaction with our project, and they have been given the opportunity to raise their concerns.

**CHAIR** - Over the page, 2.3?

**Ms BUTLER** - We visited this previously, but I am a bit concerned about heavy vehicles that may be coming from Franklin crossing the bridge. If they want to access that bypass they will turn right on to that esplanade, which is a bit of a tricky intersection as it is, but then they will be at that T-zone turning left onto Flood Road. Flood Road goes from 100 kilometres per

hour to 80 kilometres per hour, because I could see the 100 kilometres per hour sign from where we were standing. Has that been looked at? Does it look like many heavy vehicles will still take that route, because the only other alternative for them is to continue down the main drag? Has that been looked at, about those risks, and then heavy vehicles potentially coming into that 80 kilometres per hour zone trying to access onto that bypass? Could you run us through what that is going to look like?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - The primary heavy vehicle we have identified goes from Cygnet to Hobart. Vehicles travelling from the south will have the opportunity to turn right on the Esplanade. That is the case. Our design allows them to exit the Esplanade on to the Channel Highway at 80 kilometres per hour as you say, and they need to get up to speed to 100 kilometres per hour as soon as they can. Our geometry, our road design, doesn't prevent that manoeuvre, that turning. If that heavy vehicle driver chooses not to turn right at the bridge, and travel along the Esplanade, you are right, they must travel through the centre of town and turn right onto Sale Street which they can currently do if they choose to. We are not preventing that either.

**Ms BUTLER** - It's more to do with the heavy vehicles than being stopped at that T-zone where you have cars decelerating from 100 kilometres per hour to 80 kilometres per hour an hour, and then those heavy vehicles - or other vehicles - trying to access, and they speed up quickly to be able to get on to the bypass.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - In the event that a heavy vehicle is using the Esplanade and they wish to turn right at the end of the Esplanade, turn right and head further south or east towards Cygnet, you are correct, they will be travelling slower than the vehicles behind them travelling from Hobart.

**Ms BUTLER** - They might go left as well on to the actual bypass heading south.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes, correct.

**Mr PECK** - They are not going to head north.

**Ms BUTLER** - Yes, but it is a full -

**Mr TARBOTTON** - They could turn north.

**Mr PECK** - You can turn north; but there would be no reason to turn on the Esplanade and then go north.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - If they did - and they might do that inadvertently - if they did happen to turn north, left, at the end of the Esplanade, then they would immediately be in a 60 kilometres per hour zone. They would be up to speed very quickly and they wouldn't cause a hazard by being at that speed.

**CHAIR** - The sightlines would be sufficient?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes. But if those heavy vehicles travelling along the Esplanade at the T-junction wanted to turn right and travel towards Cygnet then they would need to come

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up to speed as quickly as possible, correct. That is like many junctions where you come off a secondary road on to a primary road.

**Ms BUTLER** - That wasn't looked at potentially as a place for a roundabout?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - We considered a number of options for that junction. We wanted the highway to have a natural feel and it was the primary route. We wanted the Esplanade to be very clearly a secondary route, hence the T-Junction and we did consider a roundabout. Regardless of the junction configuration, vehicles will need to slow down to use that junction. A T-Junction is a bit slower than a roundabout and for heavy vehicles exiting or turning right to go towards Cygnet there is no slip-lane or acceleration lane for them. The design rationale behind not providing that acceleration lane is that the number of heavy vehicles turning right is very low in comparison to the light vehicles using the highway, but occasionally there will be, yes.

**CHAIR** - Earlier you said the majority of the heavy vehicles going through Huonville main strip come from the Cygnet direction. Is that what you said? I would have thought it was the other direction.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes, there are a number of industries towards Cygnet, there is a pre-casting yard and believe there are a number of quarries that transport heavy material.

**CHAIR** - You have obviously done your traffic counts to show this I presume, but it sounded surprising to me. Further on project cost - with the base cost estimate and the contingency, that contingency is 14.87 per cent, which is quite high compared to a lot we get normally around 10 per cent. For the P90 it is really high at 26 per cent. I understand what P50 and P90 are about and you need the P90 because it's partial Commonwealth Government, but why such a huge difference in the contingency between the two?

**Ms BUTLER** - Almost double.

**CHAIR** - Well 28 would be double. In the same breath, it is interesting, that total project cost estimate of \$19.348 million, I actually make it \$18.718 million and that seems to be wrong.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Forgive me, I will have to take that on notice, I do not have a copy of that report in front of me and my apologies for that.

**CHAIR** - We might be able to get one. In fact, both appear to be wrong, if you look at project cost, section 3.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - \$19.348?

**CHAIR** - Yes, if you add \$16 294 594 and \$2 424 162 you come to \$18 718 756, not \$19 348 756.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - I think you are correct and there has been a typographical error there, I apologise for that and I will check.

**Ms RATTRAY** - And the base cost estimate is exactly the same for P50 and P90?

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**CHAIR** - That is the same, but the contingency is going to be different, it is just it is a huge difference - double - which is a bit strange. The P90 total project cost estimate is \$20 566 599 as opposed to \$21 196 598.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Whoever is using their calculator, the Chair always does his sums.

**CHAIR** - There is a discrepancy there. I will take that as just -

**Ms RATTRAY** - Calculator malfunction?

**CHAIR** - Calculator malfunction maybe, but it is a malfunction to the tune of nearly \$700 000.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Would be quite a nice bonus.

**CHAIR** - The escalation on both, is quite interesting, that is \$715 904 compared with \$784 274 for the P90. In percentage terms for the whole project, that seems to be quite low. Can you give us a bit of guidance on that?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - On why those two values are considered so low?

**CHAIR** - Yes. They seem to be low, given the way prices are increasing and the length of this. How long does the project go for?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - A year and a half. The escalation is governed by the federal Government. We are told as to what escalation rates are to be used for Commonwealth funded projects. The assumption with the P50 is that cost, if it did occur, is lower because that cost would occur closer to this current time in this next 12 months. There is always a difference or variance between the P50 and P90 because the assumption there is if you do need to draw upon a P90 value of funding, it is in the latter half of the project, later in time and therefore all costs are increased due to that increase in time. That is typically why the two values are different or greater than the P90.

**CHAIR** - Okay. As for the difference in your total project cost estimate, can I give you a little bit of a guide? That might sound strange coming from this side of the table. It is \$630 000 difference and you divide that by nine and you actually get a transposition error. You will find there has simply been a transposition error in calculating that total budget cost estimate somewhere in one of your tables back at work.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - I accept and apologise. I will have this checked and we will update that table for you.

**CHAIR** - If you could get that for our report. Obviously, we want to report on actual figures and we would appreciate that.

**Ms RATTRAY** - If the committee signs off on rubbery figures, it is not a good look.

**CHAIR** - It does not look good. It can happen to anyone, but it is best to point it out. Project benefits?

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**Mr TUCKER** - You have a positive benefit cost ratio. Give us an outline with that.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Explain how we arrived at that benefit cost?

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - That is based on a lot of factors. Incorporated in that assessment is travel time, the type of vehicles that are using the highway, commercial vehicles generating the revenue from their time and the quicker they can pass through a section of highway, there is value to that to them as part of the cost benefit. The reduction in crashes, there is a dollar value per crash, the reduction we factor in. Regrettably, the more severe a crash you can avoid, the greater the savings generated and the greater the benefit.

**Mr TUCKER** - Do you have the cost ratio?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes. That is not in this report. If I could provide that back to you. I do not want to guess that. I have a figure in my head and do not want to say it without confirming that.

**Mr TUCKER** - We can have it on the record.

**CHAIR** - One of your expected positive outcomes is a reduced noise impact and increased amenity in Huonville due to the heavy vehicles travelling to Cygnet using the Huon Link Road at the entrance to Huonville. We talked on our site visits, the issue of noise and noise impacts to a number of areas. One was in the more built up area of Flood Road and the other one was on the lead-up to the roundabout, travelling north near the orchard.

For the record, can you describe how you approached the issue of noise and what you do for residents who are close to developments like this to reduce impact and why you do not, if that is the case?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - All of State Growth road projects are governed by - not governed if you like - required to assess their impacts against the State Roads Traffic Noise Management Guidelines. That will identify what process is required to be undertaken by a project. For this project, it was identified that noise modelling had to occur. We had to identify whether the project would have a negative effect on adjacent residents, or what the outcome would be, and that's quite common across all of our major work projects.

For this project we placed noise receivers in select properties along the highway, as best we could, and that recorded the sound. We then developed a noise model that reflected accurately that noise receiving. Where we identify if a project is going to exceed the threshold in the State Roads Noise Management Guidelines we have to mitigate against that. There is any number of different types of mitigation that could be implemented.

The type of mitigation that a project adopts will depend upon the number of impacted properties. The lower number of properties will typically adopt a mitigation targeted at the individual property. When it gets to a greater number of properties, we will look at trying to mitigate at the source of the noise, that's the road itself. There are a number of different options available to us. At times we will place noise walls adjacent to our roads; sometimes you can put earth mounds. For this project, there is approximately a 700-metre section of road where

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the noise generated from that section of highway will exceed our noise thresholds and we did have to mitigate. The mechanism that we have chosen is to use a surface seal that generates less noise than all other seal types.

**CHAIR** - This is in the lead-up to the northern roundabout?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Correct. This section of highway happens to be adjacent to the Debra Place residences. They are the residents of the properties, including vacant lots, that we have identified, that the project has the potential to exceed our thresholds. When we adopt, the term is an open graded asphalt, that is a form of seal that generates a lower level of noise than other types. When we adopt open graded asphalt the noise level drops down below our thresholds, and in theory we should not exceed those thresholds at those residences.

**CHAIR** - With that being - correct me if I'm wrong - being slightly uphill to that roundabout, wouldn't the noise be more from motors than from road noise, tyres?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - The source of the noise itself, there are a few sources from the vehicles. There are tyres, there are exhausts, there is braking, there is engine noise from accelerating, so yes that does come into play. However, the primary source of noise is from tyres.

**CHAIR** - Even on an incline?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes, but I agree with you. On an incline as the engine increases in revs, there will be an increase in noise, but predominantly most traffic noise comes from the interaction between the vehicle tyres and the surface, which is why we chose the open graded asphalt, because that will reduce the greatest volume.

**CHAIR** - Now on the roundabout itself, you talked about, is it some form of glass, that can be used in residences?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - At the Orchard Avenue roundabout, the roundabout surface has to have a particular type of seal. It is not open graded, so we cannot use the noise-reducing seal at the roundabout itself. There are a number of residences very close to that roundabout and we are working through the mitigations there, and because there are only a few residences in that proximity, if any mitigation is to be included it will be to the residence itself.

**CHAIR** - Have you had conversations with those who are likely to be impacted?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - I understand that to be the case, yes.

**CHAIR** - The consultation has occurred?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - And this will go through a development application? Do you have a development application?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - The development application is about to be lodged. We do not have a planning permit. We are in the process of applying for that planning permit and we will

be lodging our submission very soon within the coming weeks. We submit to the council as part of our planning application our noise assessment and we identify the impacts to the adjacent properties.

**Ms BUTLER** - When we were in our committee this morning, in relation to those residences, some of them looked like new builds on the Orchard Avenue end, the northern end of the development. Some of those residents would have built those properties not thinking that there was going to be a highway very close to their back fence, especially with vehicles potentially able to look into their houses. Are there any measures, or any obligations to those people if there is the risk of a devaluation of the property price?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - The project will identify measures to minimise any impact on the aesthetics or the amenity of those properties. I cannot talk to devaluation, that is not my field. There are limited approaches that we can adopt to improve or to assist those landowners, and we are discussing that now. The most obvious is some form of vegetation barrier along their rear boundary which would assist and improve amenity. It will not assist with noise, unfortunately, but it does assist with vehicle headlights penetrating private space. It does address some amenity issues.

Beyond that approach for amenity, the only other options we have - and they do not address all concerns - are noise walls which of themselves can be unsightly, cannot be that attractive to look upon. They do not necessarily address amenity, they address noise. They can create their own amenity issue, but the project is considering some form of landscaping vegetation along that short section of road.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Something that looks like wet feet, I expect, given what we saw today? It is very wet there.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes. It is not a straightforward matter. We will look into that. We will address it. We will need to talk with the landowners about what solution is acceptable to them, what solution is acceptable to the State road authority, but we are trying to identify a solution.

**Ms BUTLER** - From the information, I gathered this morning that this proposed bypass has been on the books for about a decade, so, there are probably people who have purchased knowing that this was coming. For those people who did not know that this was coming - a bit like purchasing a property under a flight path - you know you have purchased the property under a flight path. It is when they put a flight over your property, that is completely different.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - I understand, of course.

**Ms BUTLER** - I think it is really important to have that on the record for later on down the track.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Will that be part of the development application? An adjoining landowner putting in a submission, will that be part of the development application process?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - We have notified all landowners in the vicinity that we are lodging an application. As part of the planning process, they are given the opportunity to make representation. We identify in our submission any impacts to residents; whether it be a noise

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impact. We address amenity for that issue. We provide our statement as to why we believe we are not creating a negative amenity issue or how we might mitigate that. The council then notifies the local jurisdiction that they can present their concerns to council.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Is the detailed design completed?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - It is being completed. It is not yet complete.

**Ms RATTRAY** - It is not, so September 2022 is slightly out of date.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes. Correct.

**CHAIR** - It is still underway.

**Ms RATTRAY** - And property acquisition? You still have some on-foot discussions?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Correct. So, property acquisition is still ongoing, underway at the moment. We hope to resolve that in the coming weeks, so yes, that is still currently underway.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Has the Valuer-General been involved?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - There are different forms of involvement. We always keep the Valuer-General informed along our project life cycle. We talk to them as often as we can. They have been involved with this project. They assist us where they can. The formal stage for the Office of the Valuer-General to be involved has not yet started.

**Ms RATTRAY** - How do you put a value on an orchard, or part of an orchard?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - As much as I would like to comment, I cannot comment.

**CHAIR** - It depends on the orchard.

**Ms RATTRAY** - It would be around how much it is per tree -

**CHAIR** - No, she's not declaring an interest at the moment.

**Ms RATTRAY** - No, I'm not declaring an interest. I do have one crab apple tree, that is it.

**CHAIR** - I think these are a little higher up the order than crab apples, but nevertheless it depend on what you like, I guess.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Flowers on the crab apple tree.

**CHAIR** - And the property acquisition, November 2022, that's yet to be completed. Construction activity has already - is there anything in that time line that is drastically altered?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes, the tender release, we are currently discussing that. We have identified November. These dates were presented and submitted some weeks back and projects always move, so there has been some slippage, if you like, on those dates. We are hopeful that

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we might advertise the tender in November, but we're discussing that internally. If the tender date is affected then the flow-on effects of the subsequent dates will also be affected.

**CHAIR** - Obviously pushed out.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Correct.

**Ms RATTRAY** - We heard this morning on site about the department not wanting to give direction to the winning contract for what part of the project would be undertaken first. But, you did suggest the department did have a view of what they would like to see happen, so would you share that with the committee? Thank you.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - It is common for us not to dictate how a contractor will undertake their works. For this particular contract, or project, we are at the moment internally discussing whether we could direct the contractor to start in a particular location. There are reasons for that, and we are working through those. We want the contractor to start work as soon as possible. We want this project to be finished as soon as possible, and so does the council, and what we're working through is a number of issues that might prevent that completion. So, we're working through solutions internally. We haven't decided that we will dictate to the contractor where they will start, but it's a possibility that we could, and we might. That's not a detriment to the project either. As long as the contractor is aware of that at tender they can build that constraint in to their tender price and their tender program.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Given that the department does have a firm view on that, do you believe that will be part of the tender release?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - I didn't say we had a firm view; we are working through that. We have some challenges with this project, and they're all time related. We're trying to identify the best solution that we can to allow us to deliver this project, as soon as we can.

**Ms RATTRAY** - If you only get one tender and that particular company says, 'no, we'd rather start this end', then you really won't have much of a choice. It will be taking that one, or re-issue the tender.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - That is the scenario, but we're working through that this week. We would not allow this tender to proceed if we felt that was an actual risk of occurring, or we would build in to our tender our risk mitigation to avoid that.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Do you think that risk mitigation might come at a higher expense of the project? Do you think that might be the case?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - It should not; no, it should not.

**CHAIR** - With regard to property acquisition, you don't foresee any real issues in that? Things are progressing reasonably smoothly, or are there show-stoppers in there?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - I do not consider there to be any show-stoppers. We are not acquiring residences, thankfully. We are requiring significant land off some landowners. We have been in consultation with all of the landowners. Not all of the communications have been easy discussions. There are always challenges in projects and we have challenges on this

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project, and some of them are acquisition related. For the most part the landowners support it and we believe that the project will proceed, based on that. We haven't resolved all acquisition matters and we are in the process of doing that.

**CHAIR** - What percentage of the acquisitions are proving difficult?

**Ms RATTRAY** - There's a property that would like an upgrade.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - I don't know how to quantify that, but as a percentage -

**CHAIR** - Are we talking major percentage? Are we talking minor percentage?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Minor.

**Ms RATTRAY** - What sort of property upgrade?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - I am not sure.

**CHAIR** - We are over on risk and sustainability now.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Just because we were talking about acquisition.

**CHAIR** - That's cool.

**Mr TUCKER** - It is access, isn't it?

**Ms RATTRAY** - Well, I don't know what it is. It just says property upgrade; upgrade for what? One affected landowner is lobbying the Government to provide them with property upgrades. It sounds like more than one to me. It has a plural.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Throughout all projects it is not uncommon for landowners who are affected by the way we acquire land to ask or request that the project provide them with a certain feature. That is common for all our road projects, and this project is not dissimilar to that.

**Ms BUTLER** - Like a new driveway?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - It could be that; or it could be a different type of fence they might prefer; or it may be that they don't want a fence and they prefer trees. These are the challenges we try to work through.

**Ms BUTLER** - On that, with any of the properties would there potentially be compulsory acquisition or do you think most of it can be undertaken as non-compulsory acquisition through negotiation? I don't want to compromise you on a commercial level, of course.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - My understanding is that the acquisition process is governed under legislation and is the Office of the Valuer-General's process, not ours. My understanding is that when we issue notices to treat, that of itself is an opportunity to treat - to negotiate - but there is a set time by which that negotiation must conclude. Again, this is my interpretation, not the Office of the Valuer-General.

**Ms BUTLER** - No, it is accurate.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - If the treaty is not concluded within a time frame then it moves to compulsory acquisition.

**Ms BUTLER** - You haven't reached any at that stage?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - No, because the formal action has not occurred yet.

**CHAIR** - Which is good from my perspective, seeing as we have to judge this project. Regarding the major risks and mitigation strategies under 6.1, the potential flooding - obviously, putting in a significant area of new hard surface you get significantly more run off.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - You are saying that all of that has been calculated and the run off can be easily catered for?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - I would not say easily. There is some significant stormwater management within this project and a lot of design has gone into it to ensure that our road does not adversely affect the surrounding land.

**CHAIR** - I was going to ask, does it add to the problem?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes, it does; however, we control that. All our discharge from our hard surface is picked up by a number of stormwater structures and relayed to the Huon River, which is the ultimate discharge point. Our modelling indicates we will not adversely affect the adjacent land.

**Mr TUCKER** - Have hydrology reports been done on this road?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes. We have had two reports undertaken. The existing land is in a low-lying area; well, it depends upon which portion of the land. There are portions of this land which are already identified as flood prone or wet. We do not exacerbate that. We control our discharge and we redirect it to the Huon River.

**CHAIR** - Looking at stakeholder and community concerns with the environment; threatened vegetation - can you give us an understanding of what sort of threatened vegetation there is and how that may have been addressed in the design of this road?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - There are two broad categories of threatened vegetation. They are both eucalypts - *Eucalyptus ovata* and *Eucalyptus obliqua* - on two separate areas of land. At the southern end of Flood Road, we have *Eucalyptus ovata* which is both foraging and nesting habitat for the swift parrot. We have undertaken detailed environmental assessments of the quality of that woodland - both woodlands. It has been identified that the *ovata* trees are not of a size or an age to provide nesting habitat. It is possible that it provides foraging habitat. To minimise our impact on that, we have realigned our Flood Road as far away from that woodland as possible. We are constrained on one side of Flood Road by residences and the

woodland on the other side of the road. For two reasons, we cannot go further towards the properties because we do not want to impact on that -

**CHAIR** - And create another problem.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - They are also on the higher side, and the further we travel into that hill, the greater the impact of the road itself. There is a minimal impact to the Eucalyptus ovata forest, on the left-hand side of the southern end of Flood Road. We minimise that, but there is still an impact. We have undertaken assessment, we have discussed our impact with the Federal Government. They have a separate body there to manage the EPBC requirements. We have informed them, we have met with them, we have explained our impact. To date, they are supportive of our self-assessment, which is minimal impact. We do not require an EPBC permit based, on our self-assessment and our self-assessment is currently with the Federal Government for a second review. The second group of vegetation that we do impact is further north.

**CHAIR** - obliqua?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes, the obliqua at the rear of Debra Place land, the subdivision there. The ex-golf course land. We impact that further - a greater area of land that we impact and therefore a greater number of trees. What the project will do is, under our planning submission and under the local council's biodiversity requirements, is that we will provide offsets to any trees taken.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Including the ones on Flood Road?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Correct. Including the ovata and the obliqua.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Which are the ones on Flood Road?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Ovata.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Ovata. They are quite big trees -

**Mr TARBOTTON** - They are.

**Ms RATTRAY** - They are probably near the end of their life.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - I cannot say that. They are not large and they get larger. They are not large enough to be nesting. We did check for nesting hollows and there aren't birds there or nesting hollows there. As far as the offsets, there are two types of offsets available to us. One is a financial payment to council. The other is that you can plant trees at a ratio. Depending on the quality of tree you are taking, it can be five new trees for every one tree that you take.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Where would you do that?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Interestingly, the land where those apple trees are, on the ex-orchard land, that is available for offset land. That is one portion of the land where we could

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plant offset trees, and we are contemplating it. I know it might sound ironic that we are removing apple trees to replace it with natives, but that is the land that we could use.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Apple trees grow for a long time. Natives have a very short life.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Except we are removing those apple trees along the orchard land, so that will be vacant land when we are finished.

**CHAIR** - It won't block out sunlight from residences?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - That is always a possibility and that will be a consideration, correct. One of the discussions that we need to work through with Debra Place is the amenities. If we are going to put up a 10-metre tree, what impact does that have? It's never a straightforward matter of simply saying, we will do 'X' and satisfy everybody.

**Ms RATTRAY** - What is the significant management of an apple tree compared to a native tree?

**Mr TUCKER** - They need pruning.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Do they? I have seen plenty of apple trees that have not been pruned.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Okay, I was just interested.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Those trees that are affected are protected, so we do have to replace them. We are going to replace them. At the moment, we are working through whether it is purely a replacement with new trees for the ones that we are taking or a combination of planting new trees plus a financial payment. There is land available on the site; where we cut through the obliqua forest, there will be a portion of land there where we can densify that with new trees. We can use that land, that will be road reserve land in addition to the ex-orchard land.

**CHAIR** - The last question, with respect to the unanticipated discovery of Aboriginal relics and the like and the impact Aboriginal heritage square just below that. You had a plan in place, should there be any issues. Something is discovered -

**Ms RATTRAY** - It is called 'stop work'

**CHAIR** - We have seen it and quite clearly, yes there is. It's not for me to making comment about what should be in place, I suppose, but clearly, it is an issue, with roads projects in the past. They haven't had enough examination of the property.

You are telling us that you have had the surveys done. Are you saying to the best of your knowledge there is no Aboriginal relics?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Correct.

**CHAIR** - And you have a plan in place to deal with them if they are discovered?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Correct.

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**CHAIR** - If they were discovered?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - What is the process?

**CHAIR** - Well, once you do discover them, just boring on through what might be a significant area. You have to think about it.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - What happens is, if the road contractor, or when the road contractor identifies what they might consider to be an artefact, the process is that they must cordon off that area and cease all works within that cordoned area.

They don't stop work across the entire site. They will move onto other areas where they can work, but they will cordon off the area where they believe there could be an artefact. They will notify us. We will then notify Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania, who will send out an officer to inspect that area. If it is an artefact they will instruct us what can be done.

Often, we are given the authority to, or they are, to relocate that artefact, and once the artefact is relocated, we can recommence work within that area.

**CHAIR** - Depends on what is found?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Correct. Yes.

**CHAIR** - Regarding construction, the risk is inadequate or inappropriate construction methods, materials, and/or work conditions resulting in unsafe, unsatisfied, or non-confirming works. Your mitigation is ensuring suitable management plans that manage safety, environment risks are provided and implemented by the contractor.

Does this address lack of suitable foundation, for instance, should it be found?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes. Essentially, it does. We have our contract, and the contract has a number of documents. Possibly one of the most popular is our specification, which identifies the quality to which our work must occur.

With regard to, say, poor foundation, if that was a risk, we cover that under our specification. To ensure that our contractor does have adequate management plans in place to mitigate that risk, the contract also engages a superintendent to ensure that both parties are complying with the contract. They are the umpires, if you like, the superintendent. Their role is to ensure that what the contractor says they will do, or states that they will do, they do do that, including abide by the specification in the contract.

**CHAIR** - Okay. Moving off the risk, over to the next page.

**Ms BUTLER** - I have already asked the question, so that is fine.

**CHAIR** - Any other questions?

**Mr TUCKER** - I mentioned this when I was going around this morning. We are using a material on site, and sourcing material locally. Do you want to expand a little bit on that, what you are doing there in that area, to keep it on the record?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - We control the quality of our material. We specify the quality of our material, and it is up to the road contractor to determine where they source that suitable material.

It is often in a contractor's best interest, financially, to locate the material as close to the work-site as possible, to minimise transportation. That is not always possible, but often they do and they are successful in winning acceptable raw material from the site, from the actual excavations.

With this particular project, the material that they will win, that means, what they will excavate, only a portion of that is suitable to be used for the road construction project. A larger portion is not suitable and it cannot be used on our road site, by our road contractor. They must transport that off-site, away from our road.

The material that is expected to be won on site, and reused locally, is of a quality that can be used in the lower layers of our road construction. The higher up that you get, closer to the surface, the higher the quality of the material needs to be. That is often identified, or sourced, outside of the road area, the localised. It is typically sourced from an accredited quarry. In order to satisfy our material qualities, these quarries must submit material samples to laboratories. They have to prove the chemical composition, the durability of their material.

**Ms RATTRAY** - They have to be certified.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Correct, and only then do we allow them to use their material on our site. But we do encourage our road contractors to be as innovative as possible and if they are able to source material on site, which allows them to lower their costs to be more successful, we encourage that. For this particular site, we expect they will use the lower material they dig out, and they use that for the lower embankment layers, so we will reuse that where possible. There is still a possibility, or a likelihood they will need to import the higher quality material for the upper layers, what we call the pavement.

**Mr. TUCKER** - Yes, and they will obviously be sourced locally and you will not be bringing it from Triabunna, to Huonville.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - We do not dictate to the contractor how they undertake their business, that is their business. We dictate the quality we require, where they source it from is their business decision. It is often in their interest to source it locally, the transportation costs can be horrendous, there are quarries accredited for State Growth nearby.

**Mr TUCKER** - The reason I am saying that is it is not just transportation costs, which adds on to the cost of the tender, but you also have to add on to the cost of the damage to the road when you are carting material across a road. We are paying for it because we have to fix the road after they use it.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - We monitor that, part of our contract is that if our contractor damages any road, whether it be council or State, it has to be identified first and determined they are the cause but we do monitor that their equipment, their traffic equipment do not damage our assets and is something we do monitor.

**Mr TUCKER** - They have a right to travel across that road if their trucks are to a standard, there is nothing we can do to stop them.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - The typical is to identify who damaged our road and if you can, then there is recourse to that person for damaging our road but you have to identify them. That can be very difficult, but on our road site it is a bit easier because we have people on site. We regularly identify the condition of roads. Prior, particular local council roads, if a contractor needs to transport over their road, it allows for a pre-condition assessment, a baseline assessment they will monitor that at the end or completion of our contract.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That is what happened when they built the wind farm in the northeast, they had to repair the road after they had completed the works, because it was a council road.

**CHAIR** - Okay, over to compliance.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I have a question, it has here 'likely TasNetworks relocations' well it is not likely, it is necessary and I am interested in the costs on page 8. I saw lots of power poles that will need to be relocated. Can you advise the costs and negotiations, because nothing happens quickly when it comes to our energy providers?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - You are correct, along Flood Road there are existing power poles which must be relocated and repositioned.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That is on the left-hand side.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - I cannot tell you the cost of that because the project is not aware of the cost at this point, we direct TasNetworks to relocate. It is an instruction given to them under our authority.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Right, but you do not cover the cost of that?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes, we do.

**Ms RATTRAY** - How do you know how much the project is going to cost then?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Because under law we are required to pay what is a reasonable cost and this reasonable cost is determined between the two organisations and paid at a later date via the project.

**Ms RATTRAY** - So that 'likely' needs to be changed to 'necessary'.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - We do minimise the relocation, I apologise for poor wording, we try to minimise the relocation, because every time we relocate a pole there is significant cost. Likely 'perhaps' in this instance means we are trying to minimise where we can, but there are relocations.

**CHAIR** - Given it is a major highway, you would not go underground?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - We are considering that, there is a cost to go underground, but there are also benefits, we are considering right this week, what is the best option.

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**Ms RATTRAY** - There will be a significant increase in cost, won't there? Is it 10 per cent more to have underground power, or 20 per cent more?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - I can't tell you. I wish I could. I can take it on notice if you like.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Yes, I would be interested to know, thank you. There must be a bit of a rule of thumb.

**CHAIR** - You are talking to the quantity surveyor.

**Mr TUCKER** - Under the noise, 8.2, you have there - 'a short section of the new highway alignment in the vicinity of Debra Place will likely require mitigation'. In my terminology either it does or it doesn't. It is not 'will likely require mitigation'. So, which is it?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - It is a poor choice of language. It does require mitigation and mitigation has occurred. It was identified that our road project would exceed noise thresholds in the vicinity of Debra Place. Once we identified that we had to mitigate and the mitigation was the open graded asphalt.

**Ms RATTRAY** - On site earlier today, I asked a question about the two houses that will be closest to the roundabout on Flood Road corner. My assumption is that they deserve some noise reduction asphalt as well because they will have quite a bit of road noise there, and two of them will be quite close. Would that be considered in the tender document - the area heading on to the roundabout? I know you can't have them on the roundabout, but heading to and off the roundabout, some noise reduction asphalt there as well. My request on behalf of those nice people.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - The answer is that we have considered it and our noise modelling is our consideration. We undertake that to determine if our project impacts negatively and if it does negatively impact, we address it. We cannot simply provide a betterment to localised residents because we want to.

**Ms RATTRAY** - But you also indicated that after a project is completed, you go back and check with the residents, if they are concerned?

**Mr PECK** - We don't talk to the residents. We do another noise study to see what the post construction situation is.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - We don't always do post construction. We can, and we have.

**Ms RATTRAY** - And you will?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - It is not necessarily 'will' because unless we hear some feedback...

**Ms RATTRAY** - Feedback from the residents?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Correct. Normally it requires a resident to say to us, dear State Growth, we believe your road has created a worse situation.

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**Ms RATTRAY** - Significant increase in road noise?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - At that point we will then undertake more modelling, both modelling and recording, to determine if we were correct and if we weren't correct, then we will address that.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That means a reseal, possibly?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Any number of things.

**Mr PECK** - There are lots of treatments available.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Plus you would have to do an assessment. That is time. Wouldn't it be easier to put it on when you are putting it further up the road anyway? You have to buy some anyway, or the contractor is going to buy that product, and it is probably 50 metres.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Correct, it is easier; however, it is not how we can justify the use of those public funds.

**Mr TUCKER** - Going on to 8.3, you have - 'financial payments have been allowed for in accordance with the Huon Valley Council's Biodiversity Offset Policy'. With what you said earlier with the Eucalyptus ovata, are you going to provide a five-to-one offset. Is there somewhere else you are going to put viable financial payment?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - We are working through that at the moment. That five-to-one pertains to a particular - and I can't recall the species; but the higher quality at the higher ratio of replacement. If we cannot identify sufficient land to plant these trees we must supplement that with a financial payment and we are currently working through that.

**Mr TUCKER** - What sort of cost is that?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - That is dictated by the council. I will have to take that on notice as well.

**CHAIR** - With regard to the Historic Cultural Heritage Act. There aren't any old sandstone culverts and things that might be getting on in age? Nothing like that that you have to deal with?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - I have not come across that in the past. There is a heritage property in the vicinity of the Flood Road connection to the Channel Highway. We are fully aware of that property, and thankfully this project avoids impact to that property. We have considered our pitch.

**CHAIR** - Okay. Across the page. Any other questions on that?

**Ms BUTLER** - Regarding the visual impacts - what kind of lighting do you anticipate the project will have, and will there be lighting on the roundabouts?

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**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes. Typically, we provide lighting where, at what we call, decision points or where decisions must be made, and they will be wherever there is a change in direction.

The roundabouts will be lit. That is a decision where they must, where they are turning. Between the roundabouts we won't provide lighting. A shared path will be lit by itself, of itself, and that will spill some light onto the road, but it is not to the level that it provides any benefit to the motorist.

So, no lighting between the roundabouts. It is not required. We design our street lighting to the Australian Standards, and that dictates to us where and what type of light to put in. So, yes, the roundabouts will be lit.

Along Flood Road there are a number of side roads which join onto Flood Road. They all have what we call flag lighting, which is a single light pole identifying the junction and lighting that up.

**CHAIR** - At the T-junction, you have a house, if not two, at that point.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - They are not likely to be impacted by significant lighting, or can they be blinkered so not to cause an issue for them?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes. Typically, that is what we would specify in our contract - essentially, to prevent light spill going backward behind the light into the residences. So yes, we do control that.

**CHAIR** - A lot of people are very interested in not creating more unnecessary light because of dark sky. They want to keep the dark sky.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Okay. Moving over.

**Ms RATTRAY** - 8.5. Development Application has been lodged with Council. I think that is incorrect, because it has not been lodged as yet?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - I do apologise. It was an intention to have that application lodged.

**CHAIR** - So, it is pushed out. Okay.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Possibly by December, January?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - We hope that we could lodge it in the coming weeks, perhaps by to the end of next week.

**Ms RATTRAY** - So, lodged by the end of November?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes. Sooner, I would hope.

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**Ms BUTLER** - Having that sitting there, when everything stops, doesn't it, in December and January.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Correct. It affects our tender date as well.

**CHAIR** - Looking at the maps, and just one last question on the shared path, with the cycling-walking path. Can you reiterate what you are providing, as opposed to what the council is providing?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - We are constructing the path. The path effectively runs for the full-length of the new highway, the new northern half from Knights Road or Sale Street.

**CHAIR** - What sort of pavement will that be?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - That will be a 2.5-metre-wide concrete path.

**CHAIR** - Like you have down at the airport at the moment?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Roughly. Okay; and you say that is going to be lit in some way?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Correct. Yes.

**CHAIR** - How extensive is that lighting?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - I can't tell you the spacing. Again, we are governed by Austroads. Austroads will dictate to what level, or what spacing, these light poles need to be at, and we satisfy Austroads.

**CHAIR** - How do you deal with it when it gets to the roundabout, at the northern end? Is there a need for walkers and cyclists to cross the road at that point? I presume there might be because the Skinners Creek Track continues on the other side, or not?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - At the northern end, where Orchard Avenue is -

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes, they do have to dismount and cross the Huon Highway to get access to the footpath, which is on the opposite side. Yes, they do have to dismount. There will be, what we call pedestrian refuges in the islands of the roundabout where they can position to find a gap between vehicles.

**CHAIR** - You will have the u-bars sort of protecting them?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Correct.

**CHAIR** - Hopefully they will be reasonably substantial because trucks are quite big things.

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Any other questions members? We will ask you to retire to the back of the room and then we will have our next witnesses and then you will be called back to answer any questions, or queries that might be raised as a result of that and give you an opportunity to read their submission too, no doubt.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**

**Dr LIZ SMITH**, CIRCULAR ECONOMY HUON, AND **Mr GERRY WHITE**, PUBLIC OFFICER, CIRCULAR ECONOMY HUON, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** - Thank you and no doubt as you are aware we provide you with a little bit of information as to committee proceedings and you would be well aware of them because you have been before us before, that a committee hearing is a proceeding in parliament. It means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege. It is an important legal protection that allows individuals giving evidence to a parliamentary committee to speak with complete freedom without the fear of being sued or questioned in any court, or place out of parliament and it applies to ensure that parliament receives the best information when conducting its inquiries. It is important to be aware that this protection is not accorded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to you, by you, outside the confines of the parliamentary proceedings. This is a public hearing, members of the public and journalists may be present and this means your evidence may be reported. Do you understand?

**Mr WHITE** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. You wish to make an opening statement?

**Mr WHITE** - Thanks very much indeed. I wanted to first tell you a little of the background about Circular Economy. We were incorporated in 2017 as Circular Economy Cygnet and then we spread to the whole of the Huon in 2018. We are a community group that focuses on projects, programs and making submissions and representations to lower greenhouse gas emissions and improve the use of the planet's finite resources for a more sustainable and equitable future. We collaborate and work in partnership with all sectors of the community, including business, local councils, State Government representatives to bring about better solutions.

The areas that we work in are food and water, energy generation, energy efficiency, housing, waste avoidance and resource recovery and transport. The last one being pertinent to this. We have done a number of things related to transport, we have run two EV seminars, one specifically for the tourism industry. We have co-organised a bulk-buying of EVs with The Good Car Company in Huonville. We have held meetings with the RACT, the Department of State Growth and with the minister for transport. We have met with a variety of transport operators, including Tassielink, CTST and Area Connect to discuss better options for the Huon Valley. We have spoken with professional mobility experts in lift and go and we developed a draft integrated transport plan for the Huon Valley. Whilst we are a community group, we have a special interest in transport and are following that through.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Thanks very much, Gerry and Liz, for coming along. Do you have a membership number, or is that somewhat hard to quantify, at times?

**Mr WHITE** - I could not tell you an exact number at the moment, but I think last year, it was around 40 people. We have a database of people who participate that may not pay the annual subscriptions of something like 300 people.

**Ms RATTRAY** - In your group there you have worked with, I do not think you said the council. You did, sorry. The local council. You did not actually say Huon Council.

**Mr WHITE** - Huon Valley and Kingborough councils.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Thank you. Just a clarification there. Thank you Chair.

**Mr WHITE** - I want to raise a couple of things discussed with the Department of State Growth Submission we have just heard.

One was to do with trucks. I have done some figures on trucks. With regard to truck numbers, and their geocount positions both on the Channel Highway and the Huon Highway.

They give an indication of the number of vehicles that travel north and south. They also give a percentage of those vehicles, that are heavy vehicles, so you can calculate the number of heavy vehicles.

**CHAIR** - This is the Department of State Growth data?

**Mr WHITE** - Yes. Publicly available on the website. The important figures are, I think, the counter just before Flood Road, shows that there were -

**CHAIR** - Is this just before Flood Road on the Esplanade or on the Cygnet side?

**Mr WHITE** - On the Cygnet side.

That is south, but is both looking at north and south movement of vehicles.

A total of 3738 vehicles. This probably relates to 2019 and these are figures per day, of which 9.8 percent are trucks. My calculation is that is 366 trucks. Then if you look at the geocount figure just south of the bridge, on the Huon Highway, the total vehicle count of 6332, and there are 10.7 per cent classed as heavy vehicles, or trucks. That is 677 truck movements per day.

That means that 35 per cent are from the Cygnet direction, going from and to Cygnet. 65 per cent are south going north and south from Franklin, Dover and so on. I have these figures, and there is a lot of detail.

**CHAIR** - What years? When were those figures?

**Mr WHITE** - They were the latest figures that were on the website.

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**Ms RATTRAY** - 2019.

**Mr WHITE** - I did not write that actual figure in.

**CHAIR** - No, that is all right.

**Mr WHITE** - The other thing I want to comment on is speed limits on the proposed new roadway.

At the moment it is 60 kilometres per hour heading from the Channel Highway, onto Flood Road. It is currently 60 kilometres per hour at the take-off point and it quickly goes down within 100 metres or so to 50 kilometres per hour, and it stays at 50 kilometres per hour until the end of Flood Road, where at the moment take a left, and it is still 50 kilometres per hour into the city of Huonville.

In the future, we are talking about the potential for it to be 80 kilometres per hour, from the roundabout, it would be a similar position to the end of Flood Road, as it is now. I do not know what distance that is. A kilometre and a half? You go up to 80 kilometres per hour and then you hit the roundabout.

Presumably, we are not actually talking about a long way for a high speed. We need to be aware of distances and speeds in terms.

**CHAIR** - Are you suggesting that it ought to be a lower speed? Is that what you are saying?

**Mr WHITE** - I think it should be lower, but I do not think you can say, look at the time we are going to save using the link road, because of the speed limit being 80 kilometres per hour. By the time you have come out of the roundabout and accelerated, you're almost going to be thinking about decelerating because you are going to be at the roundabout.

Liz, do you want to talk about planning?

**Dr SMITH** - I actually want to focus on Huonville and the Huonville Ranelagh Master Plan that was presented to council and endorsed in April 2019. I do not know if you have that plan? It is a 76-page document.

**CHAIR** - No, we don't.

**Dr SMITH** - I am going to concentrate on the bit that relates to transport. I will do a bit of an introduction first. The introduction to the master plan says:

Huonville is the main activity centre for the Huon Valley and provides important services and functions to the local government area and beyond in a sub-regional function.

For those of us living in the Huon Valley, it is a really important centre. It has commercial and service centres for the Huon Valley, schools, trade training centre, council officers, library, police headquarters, health and community services, Centrelink, Service Tasmania, recreation facilities, PCYC - and then it has a commercial zone with petrol stations, hardware shops,

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supermarkets, cafes, restaurants and lots of small businesses that service the local community. It really is important for those of us who live in the Huon Valley.

We are looking at a proposed construction of the Huon Link Road, which is a bypass for traffic from Cygnet - which, as Gerry said, is about one-third of the traffic. It is predicted that this bypass will reduce traffic and therefore congestion in Main Street, Huonville.

I would like to talk about the issue of transport that was described in the Huonville Ranelagh Master Plan, because the aims of the master plan were primarily to contribute to increased activity and revitalisation of the townships of Huonville and Ranelagh, enhancing key assets, and to strengthen Huonville's role as a significant regional centre. Then there were another four aims, which are not exactly relevant to what we are talking about today. I will give you this transcript which has those bits on it.

The master plan outlines the key directions, recommendations and actions. It also includes an outline of the next steps in the process. Section 5 on page 36 provides a holistic transport management approach. A key outcome of the stakeholder and community engagement was:

the effect of the volume of traffic through Main Street and the lack of permeability and connectivity of the road and trail network.

I am not exactly clear what that means, but it probably means that you do not have enough connections onto Main Street. The recommendation, then, was:

a holistic transport management approach is required, with the first step being the preparation of a comprehensive transport management study that considers all aspects of the movement of people and vehicle, including, the realignment of the esplanade -

Which has been under discussion for many years -

a link road or bypass, the number of entry and exit points on Main Street -

And three additional ones that are not so relevant.

The recommendation in the action section of the plan, which is SS1 on page 46, is to:

prepare a comprehensive and holistic transport management study that considers the critical elements of transport network within and around Huonville and Ranelagh. This is to consider and include the diversion of the Channel Highway (the Esplanade), the creation of a bypass from the northern end of town through to Flood Road, and a link road.

There are another eight points on that, but I will not go into them.

Following completion of the transport management study, a review of the recommended actions in the master plan will be necessary to ensure alignment with the study.

This was reported to the council to be endorsed in April 2019. The report emphasised this point, because it said:

Many actions rely upon the outcomes of the proposed transport management study, described in the further specialist study, SS1. Therefore, it is considered that the implementation of this action should be prioritised.

As far as I know, the transport management study has not been completed. I have never seen it.

**CHAIR** - I believe that is the case.

**Dr SMITH** - If it has not, then the question is, when will it be completed, and will a review of the recommended actions in the master plan be made? Why was the decision to create a Huonville bypass made before the transport management study was released?

**CHAIR** - I think that was addressed earlier in our evidence from the department. I will let them reiterate that when they come back.

**Dr SMITH** - Yes.

**Ms BUTLER** - Also, what was the review set for in April 2019?

**Dr SMITH** - That was when the Huonville Ranelagh Master Plan was endorsed by the council.

**Ms BUTLER** - That was quite a while ago.

**Dr SMITH** - Yes, it was three and a bit years ago. In the community consultation by State Growth in January/February this year, the introductory statement was, and I am sure you have this:

We are committed to building a link road between the Huon Highway and Flood Road. The link road will divert Cygnet-bound highway traffic from Main Street, Huonville. It will reduce congestion and improve safety through the Huonville town centre.

Now, the options were only the two potential routes: a northern route and a southern route, but nothing else. It was not a very broad consultation with the public.

**CHAIR** - What other options do you see?

**Dr SMITH** - I think the management study should have been done, so we had the information on which to make decisions.

**CHAIR** - Do you see an immediate option that might provide a better -

**Dr SMITH** - I think there may well be better traffic management issues in Huonville, and we will go onto that. I think there has been some discussion about the potential for a roundabout at the Channel Highway junction with the Huon Highway. Also, I looked at the pinpoint responses of the community to that consultation, and I found them to be very ambiguous. At this point, I have not seen any in-depth cost-benefit analysis - although I gather the department has given you some information on that today.

I would have expected that the transport management study that was recommended in the master plan for a holistic traffic management approach for congestion in Huonville would have been done before committing to a bypass. The primary aim, as I said before, for the Huonville Ranelagh Master Plan was to strengthen Huonville's road as a significant regional centre. I am not sure that the link road or bypass is consistent with that aim.

I live in Cygnet and travel to Huonville quite often; I basically just go to Huonville because it has all the services I need. I think that applies to a lot of people coming from Cygnet. Gerry has given me some figures on that. It looks like a lot of the congestion, or at least the feeling - because there are a lot of trucks on the road - is the domination of heavy trucks on Main Street. These are mostly coming over the bridge. There are log trucks and a lot of aquaculture vehicles, as well as the transport vehicles that run up and down to the more industrial areas of the Huon Valley. It seems to me that we have to actually look at it in a much broader context than just a bypass.

One question is about the statement that the bypass would in fact divert Cygnet-bound highway traffic from Main Street, and reduce congestion and improve safety. There does not seem to be any data - although Gerry has come up with some - on the destination. I think the department said they could give us much more detailed information about the destination of vehicles, rather than just saying so many vehicles on the road.

Another basic question is whether the major traffic issues in Main Street are due to commuters travelling directly between the Cygnet area and Kingston and Huonville. I do not know what proportion they are, but in future commuter traffic from Cygnet may well be reduced because the Cygnet area has a relatively high proportion of professional workers who can, do and probably will continue to increasingly work from home. I wonder whether any detailed analysis had been done on the trends in working from home, either full or part time and how this might affect the volume of traffic actually using a Huonville bypass.

Another concern is that a bypass might mean that residents in the Cygnet area would do less business in Huonville because they would go directly to Kingston or Hobart and that would not increase Huonville as the regional centre. I have covered that one already.

The other thing that strikes me and I did a brief survey last week, is the large proportion of traffic on the Huon Highway that is local work-related, like commercial vehicles. A lot of tradies who run around the valley and they go from Cygnet to Ranelagh; they go down to Franklin. There are a lot of these people and also, care providers. They are travelling within the Huon Valley and going through Huonville; they are not going out towards Kingston. We do not know where they go but they do transit through the main road in Huonville. Then the question of how traffic flow in the main street could be improved through maybe traffic-calming measures, more roundabouts, pedestrian crossings, traffic lights. I would think these would have been addressed in a transport management study.

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The biggest question is who would benefit from spending \$29 million on this bypass. There are certainly a lot of ways that that kind of money could be spent in the Huon Valley to the great benefit of the valley. I would like to come back at the end to the Huonville Ranelagh Master Plan because the master plan includes strengthening Huonville's roads as a significant regional centre. The recommendation was this transport management study and then bringing it back so the whole master plan could be considered in the context of that.

The importance of the transport management study was emphasised in the discussion in the report to the council in April 2019 and it included the statement:

Many actions rely upon the outcomes of the proposed traffic management study, therefore, it is considered that the implementation of this action should be prioritised. It is also noted that some recommended actions are based of work that is only conceptual at this stage and will require further investigation and consultation before proceeding.

It seems to me that without this transport management study, it is a bit premature to be allocating so much money to a link that will grow to a bypass when we do not have the numbers that back it up.

**Mr WHITE** - We have more information.

**CHAIR** - If you wish, being aware of the time and we have to hear the department again.

**Mr WHITE** - And we have to get the bus back to Huonville.

The Huon Highway Corridor Study has been mentioned already and it seems amazing that we are launching into this without seeing the study. We were involved and participated with a web-based discussion - it was probably 11 to 12 months ago. Circular Economy Huon was involved and a number of other agencies and there was discontent with the state of the corridor study that was presented as a provisional draft document - great to see it but come back and let us have a look at the improvements. We have never seen the final draft. We understand as well from other sources that it is now with the department, but we think that it is important that is considered at the same time as other issues before big money is spent on a highway. Also, young people in Huonville through the council committee have looked at transport and they have recommendations. Where are they in this? The Council on the Ageing Tasmania have had a number of reports working both with Tassielink and the council and they should be considered at the same time.

The next thing I want to talk about is cost and money and I have a sheet here for distribution.

**CHAIR** - Do you want to table it?

**Mr WHITE** - Yes please. We started by saying we were concerned about resources and the good use of resources and we wanted to have an idea on what the State is spending at the moment on roads and bridges. We brought that out to a certain extent in the written submission to the commission before and we are looking at both the State Government spend, and we notice that this project is listed on DSG's website as being a \$15 million project.

**Ms RATTRAY** - \$15 million?

**Mr WHITE** - It is on their pipeline list as \$15 million, it then increased to \$21.7 million, which we understand and from the State Treasury budget papers it was \$21.7 million, and now it is at \$29.8 million.

**Dr SMITH** - \$29.2 million.

**Mr WHITE** - \$29.2 million. It is an increasing cost, but what we have tried to do is look at both State Government spend and then look at expenditure within the Huon Valley.

**CHAIR** - Well, the actual figure on P90 is \$21.9 million. \$21.99 million really.

**Mr WHITE** - This figure was on the Huon Valley council website.

**CHAIR** - The actual figure we are dealing with today is in the vicinity of \$21.9 million, but it may actually be \$21.35 million.

**Mr WHITE** - The numbers float around a bit.

**CHAIR** - I think it was a transpositional error, but that is alright, we have addressed that.

**Mr WHITE** - What I wanted to look at with this was to point out the amount of money that State Government is spending on roads and bridges at the moment. The figure we came up with was \$712.5 million listed for infrastructure, we have added to it school buses. There is no public bus reimbursement figure - it is not an infrastructure spend, but it is a cost on the budget and Treasury could not directly tell me what that was.

If we look at probably \$800 million, rounding them off, it is not worth arguing about whether it is \$750 million or \$850 million, but we get a ballpark figure.

**CHAIR** - Your point of your question on this particular project is; is it actually beneficial? Is that right? Because we have to deal with what we have before us.

**Mr WHITE** - Absolutely, but I think it is also important not just to look at what the Government is spending, but what the people are spending. In the block below, where I talk about the public spend in Tasmania, the calculation is, and this is courtesy of ABS census figures, is that to run a vehicle costs around \$8000 a year. If you multiply that out for the population of Tasmania, that gives you a figure of \$2.8 billion that private individuals are spending. You can work out the kilometre cost from that, again with ABS figures of 67 cents per kilometre, which sounds quite reasonable, the quantum of the numbers is quite mind-boggling.

Then if you add together the projected State Government spend and the private spend, you have a total of \$3.6 billion being spent on passenger transport, not trucks, not freights, within the State. Then we say, well, we have an idea of what is being spent, where the money is going, what is being put in and then we look at the Huon Valley. If you look at the number of people in the Huon Valley then our calculation is that there are 10 418 passenger vehicles times \$8000, which is \$83 million.

The point of making this is if we had a mode shift in transport, money can be saved by the private sector in moving to a public sector in terms of public transport. When we look at the Huon Valley and do the comparison of average income, which is 0.4 cost in travel then we have a figure of 39 kilometres as the average for Huon Valley residents, Kingborough is 48 and Hobart 47. So, you can see it is lower. Then I go through a number of figures underneath that in terms of the travel distance, the amount people are spending and then we can start thinking about, well, what else should we be doing with the money? Is this the most beneficial to the Valley?

**Ms BUTLER** - That is an interesting figure though, only 2 per cent of Huon residents travel to work by bus.

**Mr WHITE** - Absolutely, yes.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Is that because of the timetable? Is it because of choice? This is another big debate, isn't it?

**Mr WHITE** - Absolutely.

**CHAIR** - Unfortunately, we have to deal with this particular reference that is before us. I hear the point you are making. Is it value for money when you look at the bigger picture?

**Mr WHITE** - It is also whether it is value for money, but it is more than that because the more money we put into roads in Tasmania, the more people are likely to travel. We talked about this before in terms of induced demand.

**CHAIR** - You made that point in your submission.

**Mr WHITE** - Yes, and it means that there needs to be a transfer of costs from roads and bridges to both doing the transport study and looking at other means of transport. Without that it becomes difficult.

**CHAIR** - I understand the point you are making.

**Mr WHITE** - What I think is important is to look at the Department of State Growth and Infrastructure Tasmania and see the guidelines under which they operate because we have been talking about carpooling. We have been talking about public transport, mini buses, on demand travel and so on. I have brought some sheets here but I am getting an indication from the Chair that probably we don't have time to go through that. I would like to table it and leave it.

**CHAIR** - You can table it by all means. I don't have an issue with you tabling it but we have a defined time line on this particular project.

**Mr WHITE** - We will table it but we think it is important and we thought we were doing some good work on this in looking at what is happening in other jurisdictions. We have spoken about Bendigo around this table before where they heard from VicRoads about have we got a plan for a new road for you. They said, thank you but we will look at this and instead they set up an integrated transport plan so there are other ways to look at it. What is interesting is to

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look at both the pipeline. Are you familiar with DSG's pipeline of projects? This is a 10-year project.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Oh, yes, we are very familiar with them. We are on the Public Works Committee.

**CHAIR** - We see them coming through us all the time.

**Mr WHITE** - That is great because there are 437 and we didn't actually see any related to mobility as a service as a comparable thing so we are still looking at spending money on that. Then we came across a document that was looking at what they could be in the future, the 30-year document. Are you familiar with that?

**CHAIR** - No, I think what we have to do is wrap-up your presentation and get to questions because we won't get finished.

**Mr WHITE** - Just one short point, the transport options we are talking about are recommended within the 30-year plan and comprehensively on pages 30, 31 and 32. There is a lot of supporting evidence that we totally agree with but don't seem to be followed at the moment.

**CHAIR** - You are talking about the DSGs?

**Mr WHITE** - Yes.

**Ms RATTRAY** - You believe they possibly would be addressed in the Department's Huon Highway Corridor Study?

**Mr WHITE** - I do not think so, no, because the conversations that we have had about the corridor study is about the track, it is not about the vehicles. We are talking about vehicles, DSG are talking about track. In the future, mode shift is about the vehicles, not about the track, although the track has to pass to support the vehicles, if that makes sense.

**CHAIR** - You going to table your document? Well, it is fascinating, there is no question about that. Questions?

**Ms RATTRAY** - Gerry, for someone who travels a lot of our roads and meets a lot of heavy vehicles, I think it is fair to say that heavy vehicles provide significant input into the economy of Tasmania. My understanding is that this project, I am going to have to get a drink of water, can somebody else ask a question then come back to me?

**CHAIR** - I can ask a question. The second page of your submission, under implication of building new roads, another implication of building Huon Link Road with the impact of induced demand is that it will increase traffic heading north and this will cause congestion further up the Huon Highway. That is a point interestingly made. The information we have at hand, whether we can prove that or not, but you have, 'consideration should be given to future parking requirements what measures may be needed to improve pedestrian and vehicle movements on Main Street and how suitable other roadways are for a car-dependent community'.

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Traffic coming from Cygnet that is only commuting through to town in the morning, doesn't that bypass, or the link road, take away from the congestion in the Main Street of Huonville? On that basis alone, doesn't that reduce the congestion and help to 'pedestrianise' the Main Street? What I am thinking at the moment, 'is this road absolutely going to increase capacity?' I am not sure it is.

**Mr WHITE** - I have handed notes around with the transport information saying about induced demand so we would expect that to happen unless Cygnet, for some reason, is a different place to anywhere else on the planet. In terms of the traffic though, we would need to have vehicle statistics, which I have not brought - I have done them but they're at home - in saying when does the congestion occur? So, an hour-by-hour breakdown of vehicle flows north and south, that was available for the Southern Outlet that would be talked about there.

My experience is that seven o'clock in the morning, when the early commuter traffic is, there is probably not congestion in Huonville. It should be part of the study to decide, to say, when does the congestion occur, what are the vehicles doing, and the same with trucks, where are they actually moving, are they coming from Cygnet to Huonville?

**CHAIR** - They say that they can determine that through the counting mechanism they use and the actual weight of the vehicles as to what type of vehicles it is.

**Mr WHITE** - I do not think those figures exist. I think it would mean actually speaking to the traffic that is moving through, unless you can do a plate identification pre-Huonville.

**CHAIR** - You mean origin destination?

**Mr WHITE** - Yes.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I was going about it in a different way, Chair, but you have asked the question. That was my question, about moving those heavy vehicles away from the centre of town and putting them on that new link highway, so thank you.

**CHAIR** - Well, I think you have given us enough information for us to absorb. Is there anything you wish to wrap-up with before you leave the table for just a couple of minutes?

**Mr WHITE** - Yes. Really, the main point is we are not saying there should not be improvements to and new roads, but it has to be done in a logical sequence. We cannot put the cart before the horse, and this would be an appropriate time to hold the project, because the money that has been committed at this stage, has done the design work. That will sit there. Hold the contract and look in detail about the transport needs, investigate mode shift and what that is going to do and use the Huon Valley as a pilot project for the future.

I know this is outside of the strict analysis of the road.

**CHAIR** - We have a reference from the Government we have to deal with. We are very constrained in what we are dealing with, that is all. To a degree, some of that broader thinking comes into play.

**Mr WHITE** - That is the final pitch. If we can hold the design work, we can look seriously at what is really needed and get some statistics behind it, look at mode shifting and

how that can be introduced and what that would do to congestion and then we are at a point to continue, whatever that reveals.

**Dr SMITH** - The transport management study is so important and it has not been done. It really could reduce the congestion in Huonville by other means.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Before you go, I have to reiterate the statement as we always do, as we advised at the commencement of your evidence, what you have said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table you need to be aware that privilege does not attach to comments you may make to anyone including the media, even if you are only repeating what you said to us. Do you understand that?

**Witnesses** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Thank you for taking the time for putting the effort in.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**

**DAVID PECK**, PROJECT CLIENT, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH, **CRAIG TARBOTTON**, PROJECT MANAGER, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH, AND **GARY HICKS**, PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM LEADER, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH, WERE CALLED AND WERE RE-EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** - You heard the presentation by Circular Economy Huon; obviously, there are a number of questions that arise from it. The most consistent question was the need for an holistic approach to transport management, and waiting for the Huon Highway Corridor Study to be delivered. Do you want to reiterate why that is or isn't something that needs to be done?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Unfortunately, I cannot. I am the project manager for this project; that corridor study is a separate project. I'm not privy to the discussions that my management might have as to the status of that study. I understand it's in draft mode, meaning it is still being finalised. I cannot explain why it is still in draft mode, but that is the case.

**CHAIR** - Okay. Is it something that you would be able to come back to us on, within a reasonable time frame?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - When it will be finalised and released?

**CHAIR** - And perhaps even something on why it can't wait. Clearly, the question has been asked and we need to be able to respond. Is that a fair question, people?

**ALL WITNESSES** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - There are observations made about the Council on the Ageing and youth being involved in that study, and that their thoughts and feelings are important to take into account. If you could come back to us on the study itself, that would be good.

The time saved is not great. From the roundabout to the roundabout, is there a reason why the 80-kilometre speed limit is considered necessary there, and why 60 kilometres might not be a benefit as far as noise reduction is concerned?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - This may sound contradictory, but the length of the new section dictated the maximum speed limit we could achieve Under Austroads design guides that length, approximately 1.75 kilometres restricts us to 80 kilometres per hour. Ideally, if the road was longer we would have adopted a higher speed limit to improve those travel times but 80 kilometres per hour is what is dictated to us or guided to us by the National Design Guideline. Lower than 80 kilometres per hour then you obviously start to negate travel time efficiencies.

I agree the travel time gains are minimal. They are only measured in seconds and they will never be anything but measured in seconds, but that is how we measure travel time performance. It is not just the speed limit which contributes to travel time gains, it is the fact that the 80 kilometre per hour section should be free flowing provided we keep junctions to a minimum. By not having to travel through the centre of town you avoid that congestion. It is a comparative or relative gain over what it currently takes you to drive through Huonville and then towards Cygnet. I agree the travel time performance gains are not measures in tens of seconds or minutes, but that is a travel time gain and it is not dictated purely by or governed purely by the speed limit. We would prefer to create a higher speed limit but we could not. The road length was too short, but we have also taken into account the congestion along the main street.

**Mr TUCKER** - My understanding of this project was that it was a fair bit to do with safety, more than the seconds saved and putting this road through where it was. There is also the flood mitigation which happens there on that Esplanade road. Do you want to go into that a little bit more?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - You are correct. There are a number of goals. Safety, travel time certainty, travel time efficiency, which relates predominately to our transport sector and, of course, flood immunity. We wanted to maintain the flood immunity. We have achieved that. The flood road is slightly higher in centimetres, not half a metre. We improved safety because we removed vehicles from the main street and at the moment the main street is congested. There are two aspects of the safety. One is the congestion itself along the main street. The difficulty for people that either park vehicles or cross the street and the second is the junction between the two highways at the bridge. That of itself creates a safety issue or risk, so we are minimising that. We are achieving a safety outcome and that is achieved by taking traffic away from those areas and putting them on to a bypass.

**Ms BUTLER** - I forgot when we were speaking previously about bus stops along the site. Could you quickly run through what will be part of the new project and also what the shelters will look like and will they have roofs on them? I am really into sheltered bus stops

**Mr TARBOTTON** - We have a separate unit in State Growth called Passenger Transport and they review our projects. They reviewed this project. You may be aware that not just State Growth, but nationally, all bus stops need to be DVA or disability compliant by 2022, indeed this year. We have committed to that. I cannot answer whether we are achieving that, but I know it is a commitment.

We are providing two bus stops almost opposite each other which are three quarters of the way up Flood Road, closer towards Sale Street and will provide a bus pullover bay for predominately at the moment for school buses. Any bus operator can use those bus stops and

those bus operators are in consultation or contact with our Passenger Transport Unit to determine who might use them. Our design consultants also contacted all bus operators who might use the area of Flood Road, to inform them of the project. What the bus bays will provide is a formalised pullover area for the buses. The bay itself will be a bus shelter. Typically, they do have a roof, I cannot answer that because it is actually a Metro Tasmania design. They have their design. We build their design, their shelter. We put their shelter or their design onto our pad. That will be DDA compliant. You will be able to get access to that for wheelchairs and persons with disabilities.

Beyond the bus pull over bay, accessibility becomes a council matter. We provide the bus shelters, we provide the bays, we provide the State highways and then connectivity within the township is typically a local council requirement.

**CHAIR** - Just the traffic counts. You heard the evidence given by the previous people on 3738 coming via Cygnet to Flood Road and 6332 from south of the bridge into Huonville. That is on State Growth 2019 figures, with 9.8 per cent being trucks on the Flood Road and 10.7 per cent being on the Huon Highway. That is 366 versus 677. It is saying that the trucks, the heavy vehicles, are only a third of the total heavy vehicles coming from Cygnet as opposed to two-thirds coming from the Huon Highway. Do you have any comment on that?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Unfortunately, I cannot quantify those facts. I agree that we do have a counter that is accessible by the public and if that information was obtained from those counters, from that website, then that is the same data that we would use or get access to. What I will do is, we have undertaken - and so has council - a number of traffic studies to inform ourselves. I will provide that information back to you.

**CHAIR** - Can you do that? I think it is important for us to know when we are considering the project. Obviously, given it is a safety project as much as anything else, as the member to my right, Mr Tucker, indicated.

Any further questions of the department? I think I have asked most of mine. Thank you, I think if there are no further questions, just the wrap-up statement questions that we ask and the statement that follows that. We always ask five questions at the end of each of our hearings and it is primarily to have you express your belief in these things. It is for us to weigh up when we further consider the matter.

Does the proposed works meet an identified need or needs or solve a recognised problem?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes. I believe it does.

**CHAIR** - Are the proposed works the best solution to meet identified needs or solve a recognised problem within the allocated budget?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - I am struggling with the term 'best'. The project that we are delivering or presenting to you is providing an appropriate solution. It is cost effective compared to the options that we considered. It will provide a benefit, a true, tangible benefit to the Huonville region. Is there an alternative? I can't answer that. There are always alternatives, but of the two options, this is the best option.

**CHAIR** - Are the proposed works fit for purpose?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - And the purpose being, in your mind?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - The purpose being, it is multifaceted. One is to improve safety, the second is to improve transport efficiency and certainty of travel times. Probably those two, there are indirect benefits which is how the township of Huonville will benefit from this. We cannot guarantee that there will be future development but if we compare similar bypasses to similar scale towns they have prospered or benefitted from such a bypass. There is no reason why Huonville would not also prosper.

**CHAIR** - Do the proposed works provide value for money?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes, they do.

**CHAIR** - Are the proposed works a good use of public funds?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - Yes, they are. There has been a need identified, which is improved safety, reduced congestion, improved travel times. We need to improve our State highway. This project does that. It's cost effective, when we compare it against the second option. It's an equivalent cost to the second option - to the alternative option - so, yes, it is value for money.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

Is there any statement you wish to make in wrapping up?

**Mr TARBOTTON** - No. I'm okay, thank you.

**CHAIR** - The final comment from me is that, as we advised you at the commencement of your evidence, what you've said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table you need to be aware that privilege does not attach to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you're just repeating what you said to us.

Do you understand that?

**ALL WITNESSES** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much for time today. Thank you, again, for showing us the site. I know it's been a long day for you, but it is information we need to make our decision.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**