

## **PUBLIC**

### **THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET AT HENTY HOUSE, LAUNCESTON, ON WEDNESDAY 18 JULY 2012.**

#### **DERBY, HERRICK, BRIDPORT AND PROSSERS ROADS**

**Mr STEVEN KACZMARSKI**, SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER, AND **Ms SARAH BOYLE**, MANAGER, PLANNING AND DESIGN, DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE, ENERGY AND RESOURCES, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mr Harriss) - Welcome to you both. Steven, you've indicated that it may be a productive process if Sarah is to give an overview and then we will take each of the terms of reference in turn as a discrete project.

**Ms BOYLE** - Having read the standing committee reports, the original 2007 election commitment was quite specific in quoting the sites for upgrade within the north-east freight roads area. The projects that were listed initially in the election commitment were Bridport Main Road from Scottsdale through to George Town, Bell Bay, basically the East Tamar Highway; upgrades along Tasman Highway between Branhholm right through to Tebrakunna Bridge at Pioneer. For the Tasman Highway project, that was to achieve the HML - high mass limit - geometric compliance so we could gazette that as a high-mass limit route. The next project that was identified was upgrading the HPB route from Camden Hills Road along the Tasman Highway, and Prossers Road through to Lilydale Road. That particular project also used the term 'providing a truck bypass of Launceston'. Something that DIER gathered from those words was that we also looked at doing a pure bypass route of the St Leonards area by investigating a new link road between Blessington Main Road and the Tasman Highway just west of Nunamara. There was further investigation to extend that link road from the Tasman Highway to Prossers Road about five or six kilometres in to avoid this part of Prossers Road, so that it would effectively be a bypass of Cora Linn bridge and the St Leonards area for those trucks travelling through central Launceston.

We did a fair bit of investigation on that link road and it became evident very quickly it would be a \$30 million-plus project. With the forest agreement process and the virtual overnight withdrawal of Gunns from the native forest logging in the Upper Blessington area and the Roses Tier area, the truck numbers projected to use that link road reduced from an average of 30-40 a day down to about 10-15 a day. We went back to the industry and spoke to them and they said, 'We wouldn't choose to use a road with those steep gradients'. It was going to be a sustained length of 10-12 per cent gradients dropping down to the North Esk River and climbing back out. Essentially, the link road fell off the map because it was going to chew up so much money and have very little usage and overall the benefit wasn't there. While all that was happening, we were proceeding with the works along Bridport Main Road and the Tasman Highway and it became evident quite quickly that the Tasman Highway project was going to be a bit more expensive than we had originally nominally allocated funding towards. Then the Mathinna Bridge project was identified by industry and Break O'Day council as well.

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Essentially, the money that has been nominally allocated for the link roads, from Blessington Main Road through to Prossers Road was then reallocated to Mathinna Bridge and spending additional money on the Tasman Highway.

**Mr BOOTH** - To clarify that, Sarah, are you saying that even if that link road was built, industry said they would not use it because of the grades?

**Ms BOYLE** - When we went on site, dropping down to the river and climbing back up was going to be probably a kilometre to a kilometre-and-a-half on each side of 10-12 per cent. There were a quite a few switchbacks in that as well. They were very clear in saying that while they have a flat and sealed route that goes along Blessington Main Road and although they are constrained with semitrailers across Cora Linn bridge, they would still prefer to use that in semitrailers to the 19-metre vehicles rather than descend and climb that, and especially if it was going to be an unsealed surface. They said the only way they would use it is if those descents and ascents were sealed, which would add a whole lot more cost to the project. They were quite clear in saying and their words were, 'You would be wasting your money'.

**Mr BOOTH** - Basically, they were disinclined to take the opportunity to use heavy-mass, high-productivity vehicles with that link road, they chose to still stick to 19-metre vehicles going on the bypass?

**Ms BOYLE** - Yes.

**Mr BOOTH** - That is very interesting.

**Ms BOYLE** - Distance-wise it was marginally longer for them to continue to use Blessington Main Road. I think it saved overall two kilometres to do this route through to Rocherlea than up on the East Tamar Highway. To them, the attraction of a sealed, practically flat route, even though it was going through the urban environment and would constrain them to continuing to use 19-metre vehicles, they preferred that option.

**Mr BOOTH** - What is the methodology then for determining what road projects DIER works on? You indicated that there had been an election promise made and on that, you just assumed or I am not quite sure what word you used, but how did that politicians flapping their gums at an election time translate to \$45 million worth of expenditure? How did that filter through into DIER? What is the process there?

**Ms BOYLE** - What I understand is, there were some recommendations made on essentially targeting funding in support of the DIER asset. The original steps leading up to the election commitment were there was quite a substantial list of recommendations and it was about \$80 million worth of upgrades on pretty well all the network, including Ringarooma Road.

**Mr BOOTH** - Where did they come from, those recommendations?

**Ms BOYLE** - They came from within DIER and it was essentially looking at the condition of our asset, the pavement condition, the traffic task and the freight task that was clearly rising rapidly, and the safety. It was a whole bunch of stuff.

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**Mr BOOTH** - Is that around the whole of Tasmania, all the road assets or just the north-east?

**Ms BOYLE** - This area, because it was becoming evident there was a rapidly increasing freight task on it and at the time, forest freight task particularly, but [also] the agricultural task from the increasing dairy intensification and agricultural activity up in this area. This was identified as the most rapidly growing freight transport task in the state.

**Mr BOOTH** - Do you have a reference document that we can look at in that regard, where the idea came from and what the methodologies were, what the statistics are, the research and so forth?

**Ms BOYLE** - There is a spreadsheet that was floating around that had identified the actual targeted road projects and some initial cost estimates. It addressed pretty well all the DIER assets in the north-east. That was the \$60 million-\$80 million total package.

**Mr BOOTH** - What I'm trying to get to, Sarah, is that there must be more than just a politician flapping their gums with an election promise that actually drives things like this in terms of prioritisation of public spending and maintenance of road assets, their proper maintenance and safety considerations right around the state rather than just the north-east. Having gone out there yesterday and had a look, you could have laid down on the road for most of the time and no-one would have run you over. There is just no traffic on there to justify the level of expenditure that is being mooted and has been spent already. I don't know why that is; whether it's never been there or whether it's because the timber industry at the moment is down, but certainly there's just nothing on the road. so I'm very concerned in terms of the amount of public money that gets spent on these things. If it can be justified that's fine, so that's why I am interested to know where the idea came from and where the justification for it is. Can you provide us with that?

**Ms BOYLE** - I'll have to take that question on notice because it is prior to my involvement on the project. When I came on I was aware that there had been a spreadsheet of projects put up prior to the election and what was behind that spreadsheet I'm not sure, so I'd have to take that on notice to find out what was behind that summary list of recommended projects.

**Mr BROOKS** - Regarding the link road, was it mainly for safety or economic reasons that they were unsupportive of it?

**Ms BOYLE** - That industry was unsupportive?

**Mr BROOKS** - Yes, I suppose an unsealed switchback 10 per cent draining road would be unsafe to use on an ongoing basis. Was that the main reason?

**Ms BOYLE** - No, their main reason was vehicle operating costs. The wear and tear on vehicles doing those descents and ascents under loads is significant.

**Mr BROOKS** - So they didn't raise safety concerns at all?

**Ms BOYLE** - No.

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**Mr BOOTH** - With regard to the individual projects - assuming that there is a justification for any of the work to be done, and that is something I am pondering in my mind, but setting that aside - within the north-east forest roads project, or freight roads as they call them now, what was the methodology for choosing the bits that were done? You did mention before that that was an election promise and those particular points had been mentioned specifically. Is that right - the bits that we are doing now?

**Ms BOYLE** - Yes.

**Mr BOOTH** - Does that make sense to do it? It just seems to me that this is a kind of dog's breakfast in that there is a lot of money being spent on bridges out the back of nowhere that may never have anything carted on them; they may do but we don't know. Then there is the bit out to Herrick, for example. I don't mean this personally at all, I just mean in terms of the construction, but I was quite surprised that there would be such an amount of work spent on the Herrick bit. I think that takes it up to high productivity vehicle status but it can't connect on an HPV all the way through, or it doesn't connect onto roads that meet the proper standard for HPVs at least. I think Steven said that they can gazette roads that are substandard or don't actually meet the standard as HPVs and I'd like to drill down to that in a moment, but can you describe the methodology of precisely why those bits were done rather than starting at Bell Bay?

**Ms BOYLE** - I'll talk about the HPV stuff. This is going back more historically. When HPVs were first entering the state and the department was receiving applications for use of high productivity vehicles or an HML as well,

**Mr BOOTH** - Sarah, would you give us a description of the difference between a HPV and an HML?

**Ms BOYLE** - For a high productivity vehicle, the tonnage limit on that is 62.5 tonnes and 25 metres and for a high mass limit vehicle that is slightly less, but it allows for a slightly different loading of the axles.

**Mr BOOTH** - That's where you're given an overload because you've got a so-called road-friendly suspension on a normal vehicle.

**Ms BOYLE** - It is something to do with the suspension of the vehicles. They came in initially separately as applications for high productivity vehicles and then a higher mass limit and the axle changes on that, and then both of them started morphing together, so we were getting permit applications to run vehicles that had both and that pushed it up to a higher level of tonnage.

**Mr BOOTH** - So you're saying that people were actually applying for high productivity vehicles which already have a higher gross weight but the same axle weights. Each individual axle still has the same weight restrictions as a normal heavy vehicle unless you have a heavy mass limit permit to increase the axle loads on the drive axles because of the fact that you have these road-friendly suspensions, but are you saying that people are also applying not only for high productivity vehicle access on some of these roads but they are increasing the axle loads on them as well?

**Ms BOYLE** - Yes.

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**Mr BOOTH** - So if somebody has a high productivity vehicle, what's the standard weight on that?

**Ms BOYLE** - It is 62.5 tonnes.

**Mr BOOTH** - Is that gross?

**Ms BOYLE** - Yes.

**Mr BOOTH** - What are they allowed to increase it to?

**Ms BOYLE** - Then the combination of a higher mass limit and HPV is 68 tonnes. It also permits them to have a slightly longer vehicle, which is 26 metres.

**Mr BOOTH** - But they get that with the high productivity vehicles?

**Ms BOYLE** - No, the HP vehicles are 25 metres.

**Mr BOOTH** - So they get an extra metre as well.

**Ms BOYLE** - They get an extra metre on the combination. Historically, what happened is these permit applications were coming in thick and fast - and we are talking 10 years ago in the agency - so there was some basic level auditing done of roads to see if physically those trucks would fit and the bridges would be okay. Essentially the permits were provided either on short-term basis or ultimately if there were enough permit applications there was this en masse gazettal of routes to meet either HPV only or HML only or HML plus HPV. What we've ended up with is a network of routes across the state which have been gazetted for general access HPV, HML or HML plus HPV, but in the last five to seven years there has been this sort of geometric compliance overlay put and guided by the federal government, basically, so there is an expectation now that routes that have been gazetted or are running those HP vehicles need to meet a geometric standard. In Tasmania we just permitted the vehicles and opened up the routes to general access without really having a standard geometrically-compliant cross-section that would meet safety requirements and anything else.

**Mr BOOTH** - But those national standards were available, weren't they?

**Ms BOYLE** - Not really, 10 or 15 years ago. They hadn't been consolidated. Five or six years ago the Australian government was in negotiation with the Tasmanian government because they started setting standards and in Tasmania it is impossible for us because of our topography and our financial situation to have all our networks that are currently gazetted upgraded.

**Mr BOOTH** - But they shouldn't have been gazetted in the first place.

**Ms BOYLE** - Yes, and that's the point of discussion. In hindsight, they shouldn't have been gazetted and we should have been more careful about only allowing vehicles to travel on routes that were geometrically compliant. For instance, the route between Fingal through Ringarooma and back to the Tasman Highway, so the Mathinna Plains Road,

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was gazetted HML plus HPB, so it is actually a 26 metre, 68 tonne route all the way through from Fingal to here. The bridges, once they were load limited, meant that road just was not functioning at that level any more and they were missing a link.

**Mr BOOTH** - Where will they go from there? This is the absurdity of it. That thing right out isolated at the back of the north-east, this 26 metre length and 68 tonnes, and then goes where? Do they unload the logs, take that second -

**Ms BOYLE** - On either end of this, so the Esk Main Road, is HPV not HML all the way along -

**Mr BOOTH** - 'Not', did you say?

**Ms BOYLE** - Yes, and that has been gazetted. It is actually a circuit route. The Esk Main Road is gazetted but the Esk Main Road is another road that doesn't meet geometric compliance according to the agreed cross-section. The agreed cross-section between Tasmania and the Australian government is eight metres trafficable width and then whether it was eight metres of seal was dependent on the number of vehicles using it so what we call annual average daily traffic routes - AADT routes - any routes that were higher than 2 500 vehicles a day would be automatically an eight metre seal. If it was, I think, 5 000 metres it would be a nine-metre seal, so it would be wider again. If it was less than 2 500 vehicles a day it could be just an eight-metre trafficable width with a seven metre seal and half metre unsealed shoulders on each side.

**Mr BOOTH** - What about the pavements, then? I understood that if you go to the higher mass limit vehicles the pavement construction was of a higher standard than a local council road, for example. They were never designed for the axle loads, particularly the increased ones; they are just smashed into pieces. I know in the Meander Valley when I was on that council, once the log trucks got bigger the roads were absolutely trashed to pieces. You could seal a road with a country seal and within weeks of a logging operation it has just gone.

**Ms BOYLE** - Yes. With pavement designs the depth of gravel under the seal is predicated on projected future usage of log trucks. I guess over the aeons, and as you noted, what happens with log trucks it seems, particularly more so than container vehicles or any other HPV that has the same tonnage, something happens with log trucks and they do have a higher rate of damage on pavements, so the pavement design is predicated primarily on the number of log trucks on routes like this. If it is on, say, the National Highway, the Midland Highway, it is container vehicles and -

**Mr BOOTH** - I think it might have something to do with the higher centre of gravity of logs, the nature of the cargo you are carrying. They throw from side to side so it loads up the axles on each side, much higher than you would on a lower centre of gravity vehicle like a container or a steel truck or something. They are much more stable on the road and so you don't get the weight transfer and compression damage of the foundation. I think that is why a log trucks do seem to smash the thing to pieces.

**Ms BOYLE** - And it is well known in engineering pavement design that if a log truck is using it we essentially put in thicker levels of the higher quality pavement.

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Regrading the north-east, around the election time when it was already primarily gazetted, there have been no new gazettals. There has been a recent gazettal of the junction of the Tasman Highway and the Gladstone Main Road through to Derby. That was only a few months ago and it was a surprise.

**Mr BOOTH** - What was the basis of that gazettal?

**Ms BOYLE** - It is ongoing. About three years ago we looked to gazette the whole lot from Pioneer through and then it was rejected on the basis of the geometrics around Herrick. From Pioneer to Herrick is good; we have invested in that and it's a good quality road. It is an eight-metre trafficable width; it's not an eight-metre seal but there's eight metres of trafficable space for two HPV/HML vehicles to pass each other. Between Herrick and the junction it was too constrained; it's only a five-metre seal and from a safety perspective it was too constrained to allow a general gazettal, so it was knocked back. Then applications came in for the junction of Tasman Highway through to Derby. To me that doesn't make sense because where are those HPVs coming from? I don't know the lead-up to why that was gazetted recently without that little section between Herrick and the junction.

**Mr BOOTH** - Is that within your bailiwick? Can you provide the advice that preceded the gazettal?

**Ms BOYLE** - Yes. That occurred in a different division to where we work but we can identify that process leading up to it. Generally gazettal happens because of ongoing pressure for permit applications. Our vehicle operations branch area of the agency receives all the permit applications and they are the ones who make the assessment. They have responded to the ongoing pressure from industry rather than necessarily the geometric cross-section and that's where the disjoint has happened. They're not in our division so it's a communication problem.

**Mr BOOTH** - So the department that grants it succumbs to industry pressure to declare something an HPV vehicle route without any consideration -

**Ms BOYLE** - That's historically what has happened.

**Mr BOOTH** - That's a perfect example of that Pioneer to Herrick road, which you said has been upgraded and gazetted properly as an HPV vehicle route. That original section complied properly, did it?

**Ms BOYLE** - Pioneer to Herrick is at a standard where it can be gazetted but it has not been yet. The culmination of all these upgrades will mean it will be of a standard that can be gazetted.

**Mr BOOTH** - This highlights the point I'm trying to understand - the sense in upgrading roads that become roads to nowhere. They are just a stranded asset. If you have a high-productivity vehicle route that isn't connected to where the wood has to go, what's the point of it?

**Ms BOYLE** - For this route, because there's quite a lot of plantation timber in this area, the replacement of Tebrakunna Bridge as an HPV-quality bridge. Once we're off the state

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network and onto forestry, there's a short section of Tebrakunna Road that is council, but once we are on the forestry network it is all HPV. Forestry has set it up so they are happy to have HPVs run on their network.

**Mr BOOTH** - They amended the Forestry Act so they don't have to comply with the normal road-building requirements. That then puts pressure on the state to build public access roads, or at least gazette them, because forestry does not comply with the same standards. Just because forestry has done it doesn't mean it is safe for that vehicle to be on that road or any other road.

**Ms BOYLE** - And that raises that safety question. The pressure has been coming from this area and the replacement of Tebrakunna Bridge to meet HPV means this will support structurally the HPV vehicles. It means that this will be a continuous route all the way through.

**Mr BOOTH** - Do you mean that ultimately the goal is for that route from Pioneer to Bell Bay to be of high-productivity vehicle standard right through or just the ability to gazette it as such?

**Ms BOYLE** - At the moment it is gazetted; as of a few months ago it is gazetted from the junction with Gladstone Main Road all the way through. Well, it is an HPV/HML route all the way through to the East Tamar Highway and along the East Tamar Highway. It is a continuous route now and it has been prior to that to Derby. It has been for a long time. It hooks with Mathinna Plains Road and through Ringarooma Road. Ringarooma Road is another one that is not geometrically compliant but it was gazetted some time ago for HPV/HML road route loads. That is a continuous route coming off this high country and coming through Scottsdale.

**Mr BOOTH** - So with those gazetals then can you indicate, Sarah, which parts of that do not comply with the national standard for a HPV/HML combination permit?

**Ms BOYLE** - We have been through an auditing process against national standard and interestingly Branxholm to Scottsdale was all compliant. There are bits and pieces; there is a rule of thumb if you have a contiguous route from wherever the start point is, provided 80-90 per cent of it meets geometric compliance, it is considered compliant.

**Mr BOOTH** - Right. That is in the standard, is it?

**Ms BOYLE** - It is sort of the guideline that we use in Tasmania. We know our agreed cross-section is eight metres of effective width and then relevant kerb widening and stuff like that. Because we are already in operating condition and situation, it is essentially considered that overall it is compliant but there will be sections [that are not]. The section between Scottsdale and Bridport was non-compliant. I think it was marginally compliant for some of it and this northern end was non-compliant.

**Mr BOOTH** - But it is still gazetted.

**Ms BOYLE** - It is still operating but there is a curfew on there because of school buses. The section of road from Scottsdale to Bridport particularly, because it has the high commuter, passenger transport function as well, from the department's perspective that



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has been a priority. We have that high passenger/commuter function and we have a very high freight tonnage, the combination of agriculture as well as forestry, and it is narrow, there has been a history of a couple of fatalities along there, it has safety issues and so this was a priority project and the section that we have taken on the upgrades on the pavement was failing as well. There is a whole combination of things around that that said this is what we need to focus on. Between Bridport and East Tamar Highway the traffic volumes are way lower. It is primarily freight with very low passenger vehicle function and we have invested quite heavily in there over the last 15 years or so and it is pretty close to achieving that eight-metre trafficable width along it. There are a few localised areas where we have pavement failures happening and stuff like that that we are attending to. Overall, it is believed this section - Bridport to East Tamar Highway - is compliant.

**Mr BOOTH** - Anyway, you have a document that is audited. You have done an audit on those roads.

**Ms BOYLE** - Yes, there is a document; all the gazetted HPV routes across the state have been audited against that standard agreed with the Australian government.

**Mr BOOTH** - I do have some other questions, Chair, but I do not want to hog the questions.

**CHAIR** - No, you are on a theme so that is fine.

**Ms BOYLE** - I can continue on to the rest of it. Curiously, the Camden Hill Road has been gazetted as HML. That is just HML on its own. You get down to the Tasman Highway and it is HML plus HPV on from where Camden Hill Road meets through to Prossers Road and then Prossers Road is HML plus HPV through to Lilydale. There is a contiguous route from Camden Road which I am not sure why it was just gazetted HML down to the Tasman Highway and then it was changed to something else. There is a bit of disjoint there. But then, historically, whatever pressure led to that gazettal and this being general access.

**Mr BOOTH** - I am interested in that pressure. When you are talking about preservation of road assets which are enormously expensive, bridges as well, plus safety, how can you have pressure? Where does pressure come from to ignore the safety and asset protection? Otherwise why wouldn't you bother just not having them?

**Ms BOYLE** - I think that is a good question. The people who work in the permits area are the ones who get the applications and are responding in a short time to applications, and my sense is that there is a process and they get fed up with it and ultimately it is just like, can we just make it easier for ourselves. I have not worked in there, I just know their process in finding out the history of Camden Road because at this end, earlier on in the project, when we were looking at this, because industry had also said that they would like increased investment on Camden Road from a point and I cannot remember the access point, because, again, these are massive plantation areas and they said it would be beneficial for them to be able to operate HPV vehicles along here, all the way along.

When I looked into what history of interest in using the full length of Camden Road by HPVs, there had been periodic permits applied for over the years. When I inquired 18 months or so ago, there were no current permits in place. They said, 'We don't really

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care, we have had one or two applications over the years. There is nothing active and live now. There is clearly not that much interest in industry using Camden Road as a through-route all the way.' In that sense, our vehicle operations group has not had enough pressure and enough ongoing interest for permit applications to consider this a particularly interesting route to ever want to gazette. But something must have happened here for Camden Hill Road and I guess with Diddleum Road coming in there as well as Camden Road, that the combination of the two produced enough of an interest in permits.

**Mr BOOTH** - You are saying that nothing happened with the road, just the pressure increased and therefore, suddenly the road became gazettable or was gazetted -

**Ms BOYLE** - It is an assumption that that is how this little section, this 11 kilometres of Camden Hill Road, became gazetted. I have not researched into that history but it is an assumption that we have Diddleum Road coming in here and Camden Road and so that has the totality of what is coming off this high country.

**Mr BOOTH** - But you are not aware that there was anything done to that road to make it safer or stronger prior to the granting of the gazettal or the permits?

**Ms BOYLE** - I do not know that history. There has been some curb widening on some of those switchbacks. I know Launceston council, as part of this project, if there is funding remaining from all of these, have identified some sites where they would like further curb widening. It is not compliant. This is one of the roads that was audited and it is not compliant.

**Mr BROOKS** - Was that audit done after the gazettal or before the gazettal?

**Ms BOYLE** - The audit has been done for all the Tasmanian roads that currently have HPV or HML gazettal.

**Mr BROOKS** - Okay. So it was done after?

**Ms BOYLE** - No. It was done about a year ago.

**Mr BROOKS** - When was that gazetted?

**Ms BOYLE** - I do not know when Camden Hill Road was gazetted. I was looking at it when I was trying to get my head around all of this. I think it was about 18 months ago, just to understand for myself. It had already been gazetted 18 months ago, and all the gazetted routes are on the website and it is all public knowledge.

**Mr BROOKS** - Have there been any that have been gazetted after the auditor found it didn't comply with the standard but they still went ahead and gazetted them anyway?

**Ms BOYLE** - In the north-east the only gazettal that has recently happened is this bit from the Tasman Highway junction of Gladstone Road to Derby.

**Mr BOOTH** - That's post-audit.

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**Ms BOYLE** - So that's post-audit.

**Mr BOOTH** - What about permits? Can you have a gazettal of a road which presumably then gives some of those vehicles open access once it is gazetted?

**Ms BOYLE** - No. Once it is gazetted it is general access for whatever level of vehicle it is gazetted for, so if it was gazetted for HML only it would be general access for just that level of vehicle.

**Mr BOOTH** - Are you aware of permits being granted for - like, 'It's not a gazetted route but I want to get in there and get this wood out of there', or 'Give me a permit'? Is there a permit system where they just get a temporary permit?

**Ms BOYLE** - Yes.

**Mr BOOTH** - To what extent are they being granted?

**Ms BOYLE** - For this area again I don't know, but I was involved in something around Frankford a number of years ago. There was an application, and often those applications are time-limited so they will get a permit for 12 months, so if there is a coupe or an activity happening just for 12 months they can get a temporary permit.

**Mr BOOTH** - But that's not your department, is it?

**Ms BOYLE** - Yes, it's the same vehicle operations group.

**Mr BROOKS** - Would they have specific conditions around that permit normally? There would obviously be a management plan or standards around the operation of that permit.

**Ms BOYLE** - Sometimes there are conditions around the time of the day they're operating, and often applications come in saying, 'We want to harvest for three summers and we're not going to be transporting during winter', or something like that, so those sorts of things are set out.

**Mr BOOTH** - Sarah, I'm intrigued how you get a permit for something that is unsafe and damages the road system.

**Ms BOYLE** - I think that's a fair enough intrigue. It is a hindsight thing, but as an agency we are coming to terms with them, particularly in light of this audit that was done a year or so ago, because it highlights the potential safety risk because our roads do not have that geometric cross-section. It is primarily the seal width to enable all road users to pass safely, or two B-doubles particularly to be able to pass each other without clipping mirrors or being forced off onto the side. So, yes, it's an important question and one that DIER is addressing in our forward works program, because it has highlighted that we have this massive network of gazetted routes across the state and there are some serious deficiencies.

**Mr BROOKS** - Have there been many accidents because of that which you are aware of?

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**Ms BOYLE** - I looked into accidents around here because, while Tebrakunna Bridge was closed, that freight task was happening along the Tasman Highway through the Weldborough area, and it seems like there were, across Weldborough Pass at the time of this bridge being out of action, a couple of minor accidents. They were property damage only, and really those sorts of accidents don't register with us in terms of triggering anything; they're not considered part of black spot. It has to be a serious injury. So there were reports of a couple of trucks clipping mirrors and stuff along here. Similarly, I looked into accidents because one of the reasons mooted for this link road here was to take vehicles and log trucks out of the St Leonards area and running through Launceston CBD. There were no reported accidents involving log trucks through this urban area. I know it has been held as a reason to take log trucks out, but there was nothing reported, so they seem to be working.

**Mr BOOTH** - Was it the gazettal that was done by the permit people pursuant to pressure -

**Ms BOYLE** - From the junction of Gladstone Main Road that runs to Derby?

**Mr BOOTH** - Yes.

**Ms BOYLE** - I haven't looked into that lead-up, I just know there was an attempt two or three years ago to gazette the whole lot and it was stopped on the basis of this non-compliance section. I don't know the history of what ongoing pressure for permit application there has been to get this up. As I said earlier, this doesn't make sense because there is nowhere for vehicles because they're not coming across Weldborough Pass unless there are active coupes happening here feeding along this last bit of Tasman Highway. I just heard through the grapevine that this had been gazetted and I thought it was a strange thing to have happened right now.

**Mr BOOTH** - It seems odd if it is gazetted because of pressure or convenience for somebody. If there's no basis other than pressure, there's a problem.

**Ms BOYLE** - Historically there has been. I will have to take it on notice and identify what the history was between the attempt a couple of years ago to the successful gazettal of this.

**Mr BOOTH** - Would we talk to the people who have gazetted this? You're saying you heard that it had been done, so is there a gazettal branch within DIER? Who would we discuss this with?

**Ms BOYLE** - It's initiated through the Vehicle Operations Branch, which is in the Land Transport Safety Division of DIER. It's a very formal process to go through the gazettal. I have looked into the process of applying to have the B-double curfew lifted at Scottsdale because that curfew has been gazetted. It is quite a formal process and I only have an opportunity every three years to do it. I haven't yet been involved in actually moving a gazettal through so I don't know the process, but it is quite rigid.

**Mr BROOKS** - But they would know.

**Ms BOYLE** - Yes, the Vehicle Operations Branch would know the process.

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**Mr BOOTH** - The actual gazettal is a process you have to go through but it's the stuff prior to that formal bit that I'm interested in. You have noted on that map and talked exclusively about the forest products freight task here, but can you identify on that map any of those areas that are substantial farm produce areas? The map looks pretty much all forestry.

**Ms BOYLE** - The map has been focused on forests and density of forest harvesting areas, but in the area around Gladstone and Pioneer, particularly around the Gladstone area, there is quite a significant targeted increase in dairy production. At the moment that dairy is being picked up through that area and there are some complicated processes with a B-double milk tanker coming in and dropping its trailer - I think it's dropping its trailer at Branhholm and doing a trip in and then coming out and swapping over and going back in. With the irrigation schemes up here and the planned significant expansion of dairy, there will be an increased amount of milk tanker access in and out of the area.

**Mr BOOTH** - When you talk about the scale of dollars, presumably you'd have to go from right up into that area, wouldn't you, with that other smaller road coming down?

**Ms BOYLE** - Gladstone Main Road continues all the way up there.

**Mr BOOTH** - Yes, and what is the status of that road?

**Ms BOYLE** - It's not gazetted so it would be a permit-only route, but with this milk tanker logistic that's going on now and is assumed to increase the planned expansion up here, they could well be part of this permit application stuff and they would ultimately put in permit applications to run the B-doubles from there.

**Mr BOOTH** - The point I am making at the moment is that there is one milk tanker at the moment and you wouldn't spend \$15 million or \$20 million just so it doesn't have to drop a trailer off. To enable this high productivity vehicle route to work it has to be able to be continuous from the port through to the end user; there is no point in having it only halfway. At the moment, if there was no cartage of timber products you'd have a stranded asset, wouldn't you, because the milk tanker can't get beyond the currently just recently gazetted bit unless they have a permit.

**Ms BOYLE** - Yes, at the moment the milk tanker can go to this point.

**CHAIR** - Which is where?

**Ms BOYLE** - This is the junction of Tasman Highway and Gladstone Main Road. So it's stranded, it's not a contiguous route to support the -

**CHAIR** - But with a permit it could?

**Ms BOYLE** - With a permit it could, and the likelihood of a permit being granted on a long-term basis becomes higher the further in the HPV gazetted route is.

**Mr BOOTH** - Sorry?

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**Ms BOYLE** - For a function like the milk tanker, because it is a long-term function, I imagine there would be an application for a permit to allow one, two, three tankers a day for the long term.

**Mr BOOTH** - Wouldn't that be the case now? What's stopping them applying for a permit now?

**Ms BOYLE** - I don't know; they may have applied. I don't know that level of detail. I just know they are choosing to do this trailer logistic.

**Mr BOOTH** - Do they go back and get two tankers from out there or maybe they only get one tanker from out the end of the line and they come back and hook onto their second tanker and fill that at the farm place, perhaps?

**Ms BOYLE** - At the moment I understand it is just the one tanker that they are dropping the trailer off and swapping around, so they are doing the HPV to Branxholm and then they are doing that decoupling stuff. I would imagine as this expands -

**Mr BROOKS** - It would increase demand for the future?

**Ms BOYLE** - Yes, we are expecting quite a significant increase in dairy demand in the future up there.

**Mr BOOTH** - I suppose that goes back to methodology. You are expecting an increase and I think we are all expecting an increase, but that's not enough to go and spend \$30 million on. It's a wish and a prayer isn't it? Before you actually -

**Mr BROOKS** - It is not \$30 million on that one bit of road, Kim.

**Mr BOOTH** - Well, we don't know, Adam, it could be quite expensive, a considerable amount of money, and I am just wondering how you gather sufficient justification to do it? Clearly the expectation for the forest stuff hasn't been met. There is nothing to justify that amount of expenditure at the current freight rates that we saw out there, that's for sure, but with dairy, is there a threshold point or is it just simply somebody hoping that something is going to happen when you put this stuff in?

**Ms BOYLE** - This sort of starts drawing into the economic evaluation and the cost-benefit analysis we have done. We interview to try to identify forward projections and the economic analysis is based on forward projections for generally the next 30 years. So we're crystal ball-gazing, in a sense, about what we expect the level of traffic and particularly the level of freight will be and the economic benefits for those freight vehicles to be able to use HP vehicles for that distance or whether they are limited to semi-trailer function. There is a whole bunch of assumptions put into the economic evaluation and for this section of road, yes, the benefit-cost analysis has come out at about one, which is basically saying for the investment we're putting in the benefits balance.

**Mr BOOTH** - Almost cost-neutral.

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**Ms BOYLE** - Yes, it is cost-neutral. You're not going to get outstanding benefits. There will be some benefits but they offset the cost of investment. That is why we have a number of about one for this particular project, which picks up the fact that the benefits are not outstanding. There are some and it is underpinned by a bunch of assumptions. We have revised the estimates for potential for plantation timber to come out of here because originally there was some native forest as well as plantation timber in here, so the log truck volumes have certainly decreased so the analysis has been undertaken on the assumption that that plantation timber will come out on HPV vehicles as opposed to semitrailers. All that gets mashed into the economic evaluation.

**CHAIR** - Just on that, your analysis was ramped up because of the assumptions of plantation harvesting increase.

**Ms BOYLE** - Originally, just after the 2007 election commitment, we did all this work and produced all these maps which shows the forest coups and worked out a 20-year harvest plan to try to understand the forecast freight that would be using the roads and in what time periods. In 2007-08 there was a very intense harvesting period planned that was going to be I think between 2013 to 2018, so there was a five-year block that was going to be extremely intense right across the north-east. Our original analysis had been based on those high levels over the next 20 years, but with this peak happening in the next five or six years. In order to develop our project it was proposed we report to the federal government, and it is reflected in this report to this committee as well, and we have to do an economic evaluation and a lot of assumptions set out for those because we do not know everything.

In order for that we reviewed the original information we had on all the forest operations around here and interviewed the dairy staff, but it was primarily in forestry. Essentially we took out all the native forest product and just looked at the plantations and said, 'The plantations are there, there is an intention that they will still come out, but we don't know where they're going to go or what they're going to do', so the assumptions are that over the next 20 years the plantations will be removed and their transport route will be along the Bridport Main Road. What their destination is beyond that is we don't know, but their transport route would be Bridport Main Road and out to East Tamar Highway.

**CHAIR** - Who was involved in those assumptions that you have just indicated?

**Ms BOYLE** - We have another area in the agency called infrastructure strategy development and they have worked with Forestry over the years. This original base map was based on data going from Forestry Tasmania and Gunns and the softwood people.

**Mr BOOTH** - Forest Enterprises.

**Ms BOYLE** - Yes, Forest Enterprises and Timberlands. This is an amalgamation of all the data reflecting softwood, hardwood, plantation and native forests. As best as we have been able, that whole forest model has been revised and all the native forest timber taken out. As to the softwood and hardwood plantation timber, the assumption is that they will still come out but we don't know the destination for them so the assumption is that for this area particularly they're not going to go out over Weldborough Pass, they'll jump on Tasman Highway and Bridport Main Road and go to wherever from there. That is the underpinning assumption that has gone into the economic evaluation, that the initial

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project times for the plantation timber to be removed still stays, and we just do not know the destination for that particular product.

**Mr KACZMARSKI** - So on page 13 of the Tasman report identifies the freight movements there, both for forest operations and for agricultural freight. That is same basis for all of the projects in the Tasman report.

**Mr BOOTH** - I just have another question based on the general statewide assessment of road freight tasks and particularly condition of the pavement around the state. Do you have an overall ranking on a statewide basis? Do you look at it as a whole state and say, 'Well, the Midlands Highway is falling apart. This road is falling apart; this one really needs more attention than that one, so if we are going to do this without election promises getting in the road or whatever, we would, from a proper maintenance schedule point of view, work on this road first, fix up this black spot second and then we would put in this link road third? Do you have an overall prioritised assessment of condition and priorities for works for the state?

**Ms BOYLE** - We do. Certainly our highest priority is pavement, containing and managing the pavements in relation to the transport task. We have an asset management group and their role to prioritise pavement condition projects and pavement rehabilitation projects.

**Mr BOOTH** - As opposed to full reconstructions or road upgrades?

**Ms BOYLE** - Yes, they have a hierarchy of treatment types and processes. They operate on a very limited budget unfortunately. Also we have this split between federal government-supported roads and state-supported roads. We are tending towards a maintenance-first policy at the moment because the condition of our asset is on the decline overall. Partly because it is just an old asset and it is at the end of its structural life.

**Mr BOOTH** - And the total weight of the trucks have gone up.

**Ms BOYLE** - Yes. We have an increasing asset age and an increasing axle load, so it is actually accelerating the rate of deterioration of our pavement. Overall across the state the roads and traffic division is shifting towards an asset maintenance policy direction first. Certainly we have just put together a state road infrastructure investment strategy, which is saying we cannot afford greenfield projects anymore. It is about holding together and supporting the asset we do have, which is the pavement plus the bridges.

**Mr BOOTH** - What is that report called?

**Ms BOYLE** - It's an internal document at the moment. It is called the State Road Infrastructure Investment Strategy.

**Mr BOOTH** - If I walked into the people responsible for prioritising projects and asset maintenance and said I have \$14 million to spend and I am going to go and spend it on the HPV vehicle route into Herrick, do you think that would meet the prioritisation? Is that the project for the state that needs to -

**Ms BOYLE** - No.



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**Mr BOOTH** - Where would you spend it?

**Ms BOYLE** - I do not know the prioritised list. That is the asset management group's framework, but there would be other areas with a much higher demand.

**Mr BOOTH** - How much higher?

**Ms BOYLE** - Considerably higher. This pavement between Derby and the junction is in reasonable condition overall. It is not one that the asset management group had on its five-year list. I don't know how it sets up its priority list, but it is not one it saw as a priority. It is certainly different from Gladstone Main Road between the junction and Herrick. That pavement has failed so that section is high priority. Derby through to the junction is in reasonable condition and isn't up in lights for the asset management group to upgrade.

**CHAIR** - But not suitable for HPV?

**Ms BOYLE** - The condition of the pavement at the moment has worked for the semi-trailers that have been using it but if you put HPVs along there it may shorten the life a bit faster.

**CHAIR** - As well as geometry?

**Ms BOYLE** - The geometry is constrained. The cross-section is constrained; it is too narrow along there. Across the state, if we are looking at this as a statewide strategy, there would be other priority areas to expend that money from a purely pavement asset management perspective.

**Mr BOOTH** - Yes, higher and better needs somewhere else.

**Ms BOYLE** - Yes.

**Mr BROOKS** - I was just referring to page 13 of your Prossers Road intersection, financial analysis E1. I am trying to look at the total costs. It says that the cost outcome for the upgrades to the Tasman Highway and Gladstone Main Road is \$3.04 million.

**Ms BOYLE** - Oh, that's an error. It is upgrades to Prossers Road junction.

**Mr BROOKS** - So there is \$34.74 million in total if we go to P90 cash flows, but I read somewhere that you've used a different assessment process.

**Ms BOYLE** - The economic evaluation for Prossers Road?

**Mr BROOKS** - Yes. Can you take me through the general methodology you use and why they're different?

**Ms BOYLE** - The federal government - because it is their funding primarily - requires us to do economic evaluation. For the bigger projects it is much easier to do a quantitative evaluation, but for the smaller one in Prossers Road, because they were junction upgrades and because the upgrades are happening for productivity reasons rather than a

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history of black-spot or serious accidents, they didn't meet the process we could have used for black spots. There are no recorded accidents at any of the junctions. Normally through a black spot economic evaluation process we can readily pull out the cost of historical accidents and come up with a benefit-cost analysis, which is usually pretty good, but in the absence of any accidents happening at any of these three intersections they are being upgraded to meet vehicle productivity rather than safety, although it is a by-product that they will be improved in safety. We couldn't come up with any quantitative information to run a quantitative evaluation, so in discussion with the Australian government I would say: do you have a framework for us to do a qualitative analysis or can you come up with an alternative quantitative process if we cannot meet the black spot criteria? They asked and looked around the country and said for these small intersection projects they are quite comfortable with the qualitative discussion rather than quantitative analysis.

**Mr BROOKS** - I suppose if we go back to the Herrick one, it is not really a black spot area either, is it?

**Ms BOYLE** - No, that junction is not a black spot because it is the same thing - there has been no recorded history - but anecdotally when we met with industry they expressed their concern and their concern was that they are fully laden and they are turning right out of Gladstone Main Road and climbing up a hill and there is poor sight distance as people are coming from the Weldborough direction, you would not be able to see. Anecdotally they said to them it is an accident waiting to happen, but that intersection is considered as a small part of the whole project so it wasn't considered evaluated in its own right. It is part of the bigger picture.

**CHAIR** - In some respect we have moved to a specific project.

**Mr BROOKS** - Yes, it was more of a general accounting question.

**CHAIR** - Is there anything else then on this overview circumstance, Kim?

**Mr BOOTH** - Just getting back again to how the decision is made then because you have commented that there are clearly projects, particularly pavement protection works I suppose you would describe them as, around the state that would exceed the needs of this project. How then does this prioritisation occur? We talked earlier on about the election promise, but is that it? Do you read the paper and there is an election promise there, so DIER go off and prioritise on that basis or does the minister then write you a letter and say, 'This is what you have to do.' Is it ESP or is it osmosis?

*Laughter.*

**Ms BOYLE** - Yes, we have stuck fairly well to the election commitment because it was very clearly worded and we just looked at this link road to meet the sort of eastern bypass of Launceston idea. Essentially the direction we have had is that we have to meet the election commitment.

**Mr BOOTH** - How does that get to the project planners, how do you get it?

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**Ms BOYLE** - Through the minister, but because the federal minister is the one that allocated \$34 million of their money - they have allocated the money, but they haven't given us the money - we have to demonstrate the worth of the project essentially against the election commitment through the project proposal reports and the analysis that goes into it. The federal government endorsement of the project in terms of moving the money, it is there or we've allocated the money but we haven't put it in the bank, and that process of the project proposal reports is there, thumbs up against the election commitment and what they understood they have committed the money to.

**Mr BOOTH** - Does it ever get fed back up to, presumably, the federal minister, or at least the department that sends the money out, that the whole election promise was a dumb idea and there are better things to do with the money? Does that ever happen?

**Ms BOYLE** - It is just like, wow, we have this money and commitment that has come through an election process and as a government agency, that is our requirement to meet that election commitment.

**Mr BROOKS** - Implement government policy, I suppose they responded to it in their budget.

**Ms BOYLE** - Yes, it was funded on the Nation Building program and they had it locked in there right from the start. My previous experience, not with this project but there was a previous election, federal and state commitment along the NETAS, north-east Tasmania access study, it was \$20 million - \$10 million from the state and \$10 million from federal - for the Lilydale-Golconda Road and that election commitment was very clear that it was to be spent on Lilydale-Golconda Road. It became evident through our work that there were other areas that needed the money in order to make that transport task work. One section was the Tasman Highway, through the Targa area and there was a missing link there of two-and-a-half kilometres - we had upgraded to each side and then there was this goat track of two-and-a-half kilometres.

Similarly, there were some sections on Bridport Main Road which were in desperate need and it was very narrow and there have been a high number of accidents and the pavement had failed. It was a complex process. It was not Nation Building, it was under the previous format and I cannot remember what it was called, but it had been locked in basically at the legislation level and it was a very complex process to get the federal government to agree for the Tasmanian \$10 million to be reallocated to the Tasman Highway section through Targa and a little bit on Bridport Main Road.

They were my personal experiences from another area - different bucket of money, different funding framework - but it was a process and that commitment was from the election before. It was locked in and that was the election expectation to invest that \$20 million on the Lilydale-Golconda route, and it was a lengthy negotiation process to extract the Tasmanian contribution to this thing elsewhere.

**Mr BOOTH** - It seems like these road promises were the only election promises that were kept then, is that right?

**Ms BOYLE** - We have not tried renegotiating any of the election promises. Mostly, because it has been downscoped a fair bit, we cannot deliver all that was asked for in the election

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for the amount of money. Our negotiations have been more about reducing that political expectation that we can deliver all that was originally committed to in the election.

**Mr BOOTH** - Can you give us an indication please, Sarah, of the long-term maintenance burden that this will put on the state to maintain it? What is the life cycle of a road that is constructed to high-productivity vehicle standard?

**Ms BOYLE** - For each of the Tasman and the part of Bridport Main Road, because we are doing pretty well full-depth pavement strengthening and both projects are having pavement strengthening and the five kilometres on Bridport Main Road are basically full-depth pavement recovery and rehabilitation, they are typically designed for about 25 years on forward projections of what the freight usage is going to be. Something like this section of Bridport Main Road which we are doing the major works on, because that is close to failed at the moment, currently it has a much higher rate of annual maintenance requirements. We are spending more money each year just to try to hold it together in some basic form of functionality.

What will happen is, we will repair it and, yes, there is a bit more sealed width for us to maintain, but the maintenance costs over the next 10 years will basically go down. We have this graph. At the moment we are spending an increasing amount of money each year. We do these upgrades and it is going to drop sharply and then gradually increase after about eight, nine or 10 years and we will start spending a bit more money on it. It shifts the length of the life, so we're essentially doing this for the next 20 to 25 years and there will be less money required to maintain it in the next 10 years or so and then we will gradually start building up again 10 to 15 years beyond that.

**Mr BOOTH** - If you have a gravel road as opposed to a bitumen road, what is the highest annualised maintenance cost, assuming they were both built to a foundation standard that was suitable for the task?

**Ms BOYLE** - Interestingly, we've been through a cycle nationally and internationally of it being more expensive to maintain a sealed surface under freight. We haven't taken it up here in Tasmania so much but certainly on the mainland and internationally there has been a trend to revert roads back to unsealed surfaces. That has now flipped around and there has been an awareness that it's actually easier to keep the waterproof surface on a road because once you have that on and it is kept intact you don't have to go back as much to maintain that. You still have to maintain a waterproof surface on an unsealed road by resheeting and grading and keeping the shape of the road.

So there is a move back to sealing roads. As to the Gladstone Main Road section we spoke earlier about the eight metres of trafficable width and how for the low traffic volumes you could have an unsealed section of shoulder to make that up, but our own maintenance people have said it actually costs them more to maintain a gravel shoulder than a sealed shoulder, and over the life cycle of the road they wanted sealed shoulders. So we are tending to go to a wider sealed width and even though the traffic volumes may not warrant it, the life cycle maintenance costs are pointing towards the fact that it is cheaper to have the wider sealed option, and then they don't have to be coming back replacing and resheeting the gravel shoulders and regrading it and keeping the edge drop managed between the sealed and the gravel parts.

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**Mr BOOTH** - That brings me to another point with regard to the Vehicle Operations Branch granting permits not just for the high productivity vehicles but for an increased heavy mass limit vehicle on a road that in fact does not have the foundation structure. A particular problem we had when I was in local council was that the rural roads were just smashed to pieces by the ordinary log trucks, let alone ones that were given an extra couple of tonnes per axle. Is there any requirement before the Vehicle Operations Branch grants a permit to assess the foundation of the road and the effect it will have on the road by granting that extra tonnage?

**Ms BOYLE** - In the process of granting a permit they do talk to the different areas in the agency. I have seen them historically, but I haven't been involved for a while and I am just trying to recall the different areas that are supposed to approve and tick it off. I am not sure and I would have to have a look at the forms to know whether asset management was consulted or not.

**Mr BOOTH** - So you're not sure?

**Ms BOYLE** - It has been many years since I have personally had to tick off and approve the forms, so I just cannot remember all the different areas.

**Mr BOOTH** - You can understand granting a one-off permit if an indivisible load like a massive transformer had to be moved from point A to point B; a one-way journey at a slow rate is quite different than a permit to continually cart an overload and axle weight that is beyond the standards the road was constructed for. One would expect that they wouldn't be able to grant permits just because someone was harassing them by ringing them on the phone, there would have to be a logical reason for it.

**Ms BOYLE** - There is a process that is stepped through but I have not personally been approached because it has not affected any of my projects. You could perhaps take that one on notice to have a look at the form that is used to grant approval.

**Mr BOOTH** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Sarah, had you finished your overview of the rationale for the region?

**Ms BOYLE** - I think so.

**CHAIR** - Mr Brooks has a commitment at 11.30 a.m. for about 30 minutes.

**Mr BROOKS** - Yes, Chair. I would request either a break for a coffee or early lunch at 11.30 or that we are given the information we have requested and adjourn until the committee meets again at another time. I am not sure whether Mr Booth wants to go into detail but I certainly think the information we have asked for we will need time to consider and go through. I would also like to seek some community consultation as well. I am happy to continue but I will ask for a recess at 11.30 for about half an hour.

**CHAIR** - Given that we haven't specifically gone to the three projects discretely yet what is the view of the committee in terms of further consideration? We are here to work until whatever time today is required to consider the references before us and we are asking for further information anyway. My judgment would be that the committee is not in a

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position today to deliberate on the projects because of the further information we have requested. We will be reconvening at some stage anyway and that might mean having Steven and Sarah before the committee for that further consideration after we get the information. Whether we can take all of the evidence from Sarah and Steven today specifically with regard to the projects is a moot point, I suppose, because we may get the further information and based on that we may make a judgment that we cannot proceed without further examination of the witnesses.

**Mr BOOTH** - Just a suggestion, Chair. Both witnesses have come up from Hobart. We could probably do the examination of each individual project, given that the background that applies to all of them shouldn't take too long, in Hobart.

**CHAIR** - We could easily, and that could be on a sitting day or before parliament resumes, bearing in mind it is four or five weeks away before the resumption of parliament, but certainly the continuation of the evidence could occur in Hobart.

**Mr KACZMARSKI** - In some respects the background Sarah has provided is the basis on which these projects are being developed and why we are doing what we are doing. As I described as we went around yesterday, what we are doing is an eight-metre sealed road. It is fairly straightforward apart from the small bits about bus bays on the Bridport Main Road, so from that perspective I think we have discussed a lot of the rationale behind why we are doing it and the project is actually quite simple. In fact we are just widening the seal with pavement strengthening to eight metres, so I am not sure how many questions the committee might have of us but I am certainly happy to answer specific questions on the projects and so on.

**CHAIR** - Yes, but that is indeterminate, of course; that will flow as the process unfolds in terms of that questioning, and that may be expansive or it may be quite compressed. Really it is a judgment we need to make. We can adjourn now for consideration at another time or we can adjourn and come back and take the evidence with regard to the three projects, bearing in mind, of course, that we have some other information which is yet to be provided to the committee and we may need Sarah and Steven back anyway.

**Mr BOOTH** - As a suggestion, I think we should adjourn until another time and get the other information and then have an interview with you briefly or at length, depending on what other stuff we find out. I think that would be the best thing, and then you don't have to wait around while we have this recess.

**CHAIR** - Absolutely. We are not going to proceed without that further information, because it is already on the record that we are requiring it, so we won't be proceeding without it.

**Mr BROOKS** - I would like to engage further with some community people.

**Mr BOOTH** - With the council and so forth that you talked about.

**Mr BROOKS** - Well, maybe the committee will determine to call the council or the minister or other witnesses. I certainly wouldn't say that may or may not happen, but I suppose as a committee member I would like to just liaise with some people in the community about their thoughts on it as well.

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**CHAIR** - Both of those scenarios, Adam, can occur if we were to proceed after a short adjournment today to take the further evidence. Those processes can still occur -

**Mr BROOKS** - I understand that, yes.

**CHAIR** - between now and when we next convene. So it is a matter of whether we adjourn sine die for further consideration of the project, and that would mean Sarah and Steven coming back in front of the committee to specifically address the three projects.

**Mr BROOKS** - Chair, I am probably supporting Mr Booth's position on that. We need the information.

**CHAIR** - It seems to me that's a productive process. We are going to spend some substantial time anyway. I just raise an interesting observation with regard to the Prossers Road reference. It is \$3.385 million so it does not go to the threshold of \$5 million, but nonetheless we have the reference from His Excellency, so we will consider that during that process of time as well. My prima facie view is that we would need to consider that, because it is a reference to us from His Excellency.

**Mr KACZMARSKI** - The reason for that is that any projects that are part of a bigger program, and if the components are less than the \$5 million, are referenced back to the committee.

**CHAIR** - That's a judgment that only the department can make in terms of the connectivity of the three we are talking about.

**Mr BOOTH** - Probably because it was all part of that election promise there, Paul.

**Mr KACZMARSKI** - That is our understanding of the requirement to bring the projects forward to this committee.

**CHAIR** - I agree with both Adam and Kim that that will be a productive process, because there is substantial consideration of these references yet to be brought to the committee, so with that we will adjourn the hearing to a date to be fixed. In that interim period it would seem reasonable that we be provided with the information we have discussed and we will communicate with you formally about that to clarify that which we have requested, and then we will reconvene. Can we just summarise those documents that we are looking for now?

**Mr KACZMARSKI** - Perhaps I can get together with both of you after we adjourn just to check off, but as there the recording is still going, these are the ones I have. There is the spreadsheet of potential projects prepared after the 2007 federal election; details of the gazettal process; explanation of how the HPV routes are gazetted when they are not compliant; a copy of the audit report of HPV-gazetted roads; a copy of a document entitled State Road Infrastructure and Development Strategy; and the form that is used internally within the department for consultation about gazettal of roads. If there is some better way of describing those for your purposes, we will sort that out shortly.

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**CHAIR** - We can refer to the record in terms of the dialogue which has been recorded. So with that, then, we will adjourn to a date to be fixed, and will communicate formally with you during that interim period.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**