

# PUBLIC

## THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET AT THE WEST COAST COUNCIL CHAMBERS, QUEENSTOWN ON THURSDAY 18 MAY 2023

### MURCHISON HIGHWAY CORRIDOR UPGRADE - STITT RIVER BRIDGE TO HENTY MAIN ROAD

**The Committee met at 11.30 a.m.**

**CHAIR (Mr Valentine)** - For the record, we are dealing with a reference for the Murchison Highway Corridor Upgrade - Stitt River Bridge to Henty Main Road.

We have apologies from Ms Rattray and Mr Tucker.

The members who are here today are Ms Jen Butler MP, Rob Valentine MLC, Simon Wood MP and we have Scott Hennessy, who is the secretary of the committee, and James Reynolds from Hansard.

**Mr RICHARD HUNTER**, PROJECT MANAGER, PROGRAMMING AND DELIVERY, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH; **Mr ZACK HEPBURN**, TEAM LEADER, PROGRAMMING AND DELIVERY, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH; AND **Mr DAVID PECK**, NETWORK PLANNER, TRANSPORT NETWORK PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE TASMANIA WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** - Welcome to the committee. There is some very important information that you have to provide to us for us to be able to come to a decision on this particular project. We have been circulated with the submission. Members have had the opportunity to read that and no doubt we will have questions as we go through. Now I just need to read to you a little blurb that I have here in relation to hearings.

We are pleased, as a committee, to hear your evidence today. Before you begin, I'd like to inform you of some important aspects of committee proceedings, if you haven't been to one before. A committee hearing is a proceeding in parliament. This means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege. It's 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 that 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. It is a public hearing. Members of the public or journalists may be present and this means your evidence may be reported. Do you understand?

**Witnesses** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Would you like to make an opening statement?

## PUBLIC

**Mr PECK** - The Department thanks the members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for travelling to Queenstown to hear our submission for further works on the Murchison and Zeehan highways.

The Department is continually trying to invest our road program budget in priority projects. The Murchison Highway has been identified by the state as a key West Coast transport corridor and for the last several years has had a continual program of safety upgrades along the highway.

Since 2010, the Australian and Tasmanian governments have contributed \$71.73 million into safety upgrades along the Murchison Highway. This investment commenced with a 2010 election commitment of \$21 million of state only funding. This was then complemented with a further investment of \$6.98 million from the state and from stage five of the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program. This was then augmented with \$43.75 million from the Roads of Strategic Importance program (ROSI) which is the funding that we are asking for use under this current road projects program.

The investment started with projects in the northern section of the Murchison Highway and has proceeded south to the Sterling River Bridge just north of Rosebery.

We are now coming to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works to access funding for the remaining works on the Murchison Highway and the Zeehan Highway under the ROSI program.

If this program is approved by this committee, we will then proceed with our submission to the Australian Government for approval of the ROSI co-funding.

Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. It's now open to members to ask questions. What we usually do is work our way through the submission so that we can save doubling up. Given the way the submission is structured, unless there is a general question, we could start at chapter 2 which is the project's scope. All of what's in the summary is dealt with in the body of the report. If members are happy for that we will, we will go to chapter 2.

**Ms BUTLER** - Chair, I have one question and it's a general question. It's more of an overview, but it was under 1.4, related projects in strategic content.

It has two dot points and it talks about:

... in late 2020 the Department of State Growth prepared high-level drawings detailing road upgrades for sections of Murchison and Zeehan highways and they were developed based on consideration of project identification report as well as issues raised by the West Coast Council and the Tasmanian Transport Association.

Could you give us a very general overview of some of the issues that West Coast Council and the Tasmanian Transport Association (TTA) brought to the table?

## PUBLIC

**Mr HUNTER** - Outside of the safety upgrades, I haven't got any specifics on it, no.

**Mr PECK** - Is your question specifically about what councils and the TTA have asked for?

**Ms BUTLER** - Yes. It states here that issues were raised by the West Coast Council and the Tasmanian Transport Association. I'm interested in what were some of the issues that were raised by the West Coast Council and the TTA.

**Mr PECK** - The TTA issues were the ability for trucks to have a place to load check and that's what those pullover bays are for. They are also interested in the amenity for the drivers; toilets and things like that are issues that they brought up. But I wasn't involved with any of the discussions with the West Coast Council.

**Ms BUTLER** - Okay. It was mainly to do with amenities, the issues raised by -

**Mr PECK** - The amenities and safety.

**Ms BUTLER** - and safety.

**Mr PECK** - It's very important. Once a truck gets on the road and goes over some bumps the strappings and things can come loose or come off. After they get underway for a short bit, they need a place to pull over to check their loads and make sure that those strappings are as they should be.

**Ms BUTLER** - Did the Tasmanian Transport Association raise any concerns because of the increase in size and tonnage of those heavy vehicles now compared to when those roads were initially built, any safety concerns about suitability with the new vehicles on some of that older infrastructure?

**Mr PECK** - These vehicles are currently accessing the road network and driving to the conditions. We can't upgrade this to a very high standard because of the geometry out there, it's very curvy and the batters on the cut side and the fill side are very steep. I think there's a general understanding that if we can provide edge lines and shoulders for runoff protection that that's the level of upgrade that we can do at this point in time.

**CHAIR** - With respect to that, the size of a B-double truck today compared to a semi-trailer style vehicle back in the 1960s when the road was built, how much difference in width is there likely to be between those vehicles?

**Mr PECK** - These roads are 2.8 metre lanes now and we're bringing them up to 3.1 metres with an edge line. We are widening the road to accommodate these larger vehicles and sometimes they have different turning radiuses than some of the older vehicles. This is the standard road width that we're trying to institute across the state for heavy vehicles.

**CHAIR** - That width you mentioned, is that actual pavement aside from the lines and the shoulder?

**Mr PECK** - So the centre line is that thick. It's from the centre of the centre line to the edge line.

## PUBLIC

**CHAIR** - To the edge of the outside line?

**Mr PECK** - Edge line. Yes.

**Mr HEPBURN** - The 3.1 metres is what we're trying to achieve or will achieve on this.

**CHAIR** - And then the shoulder width on top of that?

**Mr HEPBURN** - On top of that, it's -

**Mr PECK** - With a verge on top of that.

**Mr HEPBURN** - What has been communicated through past projects, under this program, is that consistency is a big thing for the heavy vehicle transit drivers. That's what we are trying to achieve here. So, while we are widening, we are getting a consistent 8 metre or 3.1 metre travelling lane for those drivers, which does help them understand and navigate the road.

**CHAIR** - So it's a sealed shoulder and an unsealed verge outside of the 3.1 metre length pavement for the lane on each side and the verge is 0.5 metres wide - for the record - and the shoulder will vary according to the location.

**Mr PECK** - We're trying to achieve 0.9 metre for the shoulder.

**CHAIR** - So, 0.9 metres in general terms, it might be slightly narrower or slightly wider.

**Mr PECK** - It depends on cost and value. If going another 20 or 30 makes the batter so much more expensive then you just wouldn't do it. It's a value for money proposition when you're doing roads and steep cuts and batters.

**Mr HEPBURN** - It does incorporate then, also the addition of a potential barrier to assist with safety, where we may not be able to achieve those cross-sections as well.

**CHAIR** - So in general terms, road building on the West Coast, how have you found the earlier work to stand up to the heavy vehicle usage to date? A lot of roads in Tassie -

**Mr PECK** - It varies around the state. You would know that over on the Tasman Highway in Bicheno, it's beautiful and dry most of the time and over here you have a very short construction window. We can build in November, December, January, February and over in Bicheno you can build almost year-round. There are a lot more drainage issues on this side and drainage is one of the keys to keep in your road base information intact.

If you have heavy vehicles tracking on wet roads, they break down really quickly. Drainage is a key consideration on the West Coast.

**CHAIR** - Does that dictate the style of surface that you've got as well?

**Mr PECK** - No. The surfaces are usually seals in most instances.

## PUBLIC

**CHAIR** - Chipseals?

**Mr PECK** - Yes, instead of asphalt.

**CHAIR** - What I'm getting at, is that some of the chipseals that we've seen have broken up months after a pavement has been undertaken, now been laid. A classic one is north of Perth: it was only months before it started to strip off the chipseal on the top down to bare bitumen. Around here, the precise temperature you need to be able to lay it properly is in colder weather and that might present issues.

**Mr PECK** - It certainly does. Yes.

**CHAIR** - Have you made any particular allowance for that in how you might select your contractor?

**Mr PECK** - No. It has more to do with the construction season and when the Department goes out to tender. We realise that on the West Coast there's a very short construction season. So, we go out to the market earlier so we can get a contractor in place when the weather is good and they can get to work.

**CHAIR** - That's going to be August to September, I believe.

**Mr PECK** - Richard will have a program in place to go out to tender, to review the tenders, to award to a contractor so that they have the ability to get on site for that short construction season that you just can't miss on the West Coast.

**CHAIR** - Are you likely to get a Tasmanian company rather than some companies from the mainland that might not have such experience on the West Coast?

**Mr PECK** - Very likely. Yes. That's correct.

**CHAIR** - Let's go over to chapter 2 and see if we can deal with some of this. You have talked about 2.1 and you have mentioned this in the earlier presentation outside of the hearing.

The number of crashes and the severity of them. For the record can you indicate some statistics in that area if you can just reiterate -

**Mr PECK** - I think Richard noted earlier that there were 21 crashes on both sections of the highway and in the last period.

**Mr HUNTER** - On each section. There were 42 in total on the two stages.

**Mr PECK** - There were the three severe ones on the Murchison Highway section.

**CHAIR** - But no severe crashes on the Zeehan Highway?

**Mr PECK** - There was property damage, but that was the most.

**CHAIR** - Were heavy vehicles involved in those or were they light vehicle crashes?

## PUBLIC

**Mr HUNTER** - I don't have that sort of detail.

**Mr PECK** - We can get that for you. We have that ability.

**CHAIR** - At this point, we will see how the hearing goes.

**Mr PECK** - The heavies are 13 per cent, which is slightly higher than most highways. That probably indicates that there's a lot of mining traffic and a lot of heavies.

**Mr HUNTER** - That's usage rather than crashes -

**CHAIR** - Do you have any indication of the size of the heavy vehicles using these roads compared to the size of vehicles using the Midland Highway? Because of mining and all the rest of it, are they likely to be much heavier here or are they just general -

**Mr PECK** - No. They are load limited so they can't just, you know, fill it up with gold and it weighs so much that the tyres squeak. The same vehicles can travel throughout the state at their load limit.

**CHAIR** - So there are no significantly heavier vehicles on this road than anywhere else?

**Mr PECK** - Zack has actually done one of these projects just north of here and he was probably out at site quite a bit and may have noticed if there was any special vehicle use out there.

**Mr HEPBURN** - My understanding, as Richard said, is that the average number of heavies is quite high on the Murchison Highway and this would transpire onto the Zeehan Highway as well. However, the size of the heavies is very consistent with what you would see along the Midland Highway or any other road. What I did notice is the length of those heavies is probably smaller on average than you would see on the Midland Highway.

**CHAIR** - Okay. Under the second paragraph of Options Evaluation:

Consideration is given to the location of a truck stop to allow for load checking and vehicle inspection, the most practical solution to be provided in the area south of the Zeehan Highway/Henty Road intersection.

That's on Murchison?

**Mr HUNTER** - No. That's on the Zeehan.

**CHAIR** - It says south of the intersection, but it's south of the intersection on the Zeehan Highway, not on the Murchison Highway? Okay.

We may as well go to truck stops now. Can you describe why toilet facilities aren't being provided at any of these truck stops as opposed to having reasonable facilities given the distances involved? Can you give us that rationale? The Tasmanian Transport Association is keen to see proper facilities for their drivers.

## PUBLIC

**Mr PECK** - We're keen to provide them where we can. Yes.

**CHAIR** - Can you describe how you might be complying with the Australian Standards and also the Department's strategic heavy vehicle driver rest area?

**Mr PECK** - Section one of this project is less than 5 kilometres. It originates in Zeehan and heads to the intersection of the Murchison Highway.

**CHAIR** - Are there facilities in Zeehan that drivers can use without going into minor streets?

**Mr PECK** - When we look at population centres, I don't think we go down to the practice of walking the streets and seeing if there's a toilet available, but we look at population centres.

There's a population centre in Zeehan where they could stop if they needed to. You wouldn't provide something, a toilet, within 5 kilometres of that. We have one on either side of the highway on the Zeehan within 4 kilometres of the previous stop. We think that's practical. On the Murchison Highway we've got a northbound pullover, which is close to Rosebery, so we don't feel there was a requirement to put in toilet facilities there.

**Mr HUNTER** - There are toilets in Rosebery, I know that. I'm not clear about Zeehan but I know there are in Rosebery.

**CHAIR** - Are they accessible?

**Mr HUNTER** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - They aren't 2 kilometres off the road?

**Mr HUNTER** - They're literally within 100 metres of the main corridor.

**CHAIR** - So they're accessible to a driver that might be on a B-double who has to park it next to the kerb.

**Mr HUNTER** - He could pull in on the main road there and then walk up to the toilets. With regard to Zeehan, I'm trying to remember, but I'm not familiar enough with the township itself but I think there are public toilets there as well.

**Mr HEPBURN** - Probably an example of where we - and obviously this is all in very close consultation with industry and in particular the heavy vehicle industry - look at providing and we are looking at providing facilities but under a separate project and program we mentioned off the record is Fossey River.

These locations, as David indicated, are not four or 5 kilometres or even 10 kilometres from major cities or town centres. It's where you're getting maybe 50 kilometres of travelling time or travelling distance and subsequent time between those designated areas, whether it be a female or a male transit driver needing to transit, they could pull over and have that facility available to them. We are working on Fossey River as one of the potential designated stops where we would incorporate -

## PUBLIC

**Mr PECK** - There is one there right now that's in very poor condition and we've got a design to upgrade that substantially.

**CHAIR** - I asked the question specifically because one of the panel members, Tania Rattray MLC, had a specific concern about that. She wasn't able to be here today so I said I'd put that question for her.

It seems like there is a strategy - you're looking at upgrading the Fossey River site and then these others are close enough to other amenities.

**Mr PECK** - The Department can assure the Chair that we are going to upgrade Fossey River. We have the funding to do it. We have the designs in place and it will be done.

**CHAIR** - To your knowledge, the Tasmanian Transport Association is happy with it.

**Mr PECK** - They are very involved. Simon Buxton is leading that consultation.

**CHAIR** - Are they happy with that outcome?

**Mr PECK** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. It is very much appreciated.

**Ms BUTLER** - I have a question on 2.2. In relation to the Natural Values Assessment (NVA) undertaken in April 2022, it states here that the design has been modified to avoid the impact on the *Eucalyptus ovata*. Can you explain what that modification looks like?

**Mr PECK** - I'll pass that onto Richard.

**Mr HUNTER** - My understanding of what happened at that stage was that we had located our pull over load checking bays to avoid having any impact on the area. We've got an area around there near the intersection which is a reserve and so we've located our truck pull over bays so they're outside of that reserve area. We're not having any environmental impacts on it.

**Mr HEPBURN** - In the original scoping phase it would have been very high level. It would have been just looking at distances in terms of the ideal locations for those truck pull over bays and then you do your NVA to get more informed on some of the values there. In this case, if it was found to have values, it would mean as we progressed the design, we would try to avoid impacts to those as opposed to taking them or having impacts on them.

**Mr HUNTER** - The other one is the northbound overtaking opportunity that we've got on the stage two works, the Murchison works. We've moved that because it was going to impact the Serpentine area. We can't do any of anything in that area.

**Ms BUTLER** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - With the pull over bays again, thinking of the frequency of traffic, how many vehicles could they accommodate? Is it just a single B-double or would they be able to



## PUBLIC

accommodate more than that if you've got a number of trucks on the road that are wanting to pull over and check loads and things like that?

**Mr HUNTER** - I would be saying that they're suitable for one truck because it is really a load checking bay. It's not a pull over rest area bay; it's a load checking bay. It's not designed for having five B-doubles pull up there and have a meeting and a coffee and fags, et cetera.

**CHAIR** - Are they directly off the side of the road? The drivers don't need to take a deviation off the main road?

**Mr PECK** - There's no barrier -

**CHAIR** - And there is no barrier between the trucks and the road?

**Mr HEPBURN** - Ideally, they would be for one truck, they are substantial in distance. I believe they are 90 to 100 metres in length. Realistically, they could accommodate two or three trucks if they needed to be there at the same time.

**CHAIR** - Or if they were polite drivers recognising that others might want to pass?

**Mr PECK** - They have tapers on them, so we don't want them stopping on the highway and then pulling in. As a result, there's a long taper coming in and there's a long taper coming out so they can gain speed as they come out. You really wouldn't want more than one there at a time.

**CHAIR** - As for signage, in relation to those pull over bays, are there signs which give drivers plenty of warning that there's a pull over bay coming, giving light vehicle drivers information that indicates for safety reasons what's going on? The sort of signage that complies with the national signage requirements.

**Mr HUNTER** - Yes it will. That is part of the consultant's brief and one of the requirements of the design.

**CHAIR** - That will be part of the part of the tender?

**Mr HUNTER** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Are there any other questions?

**Ms BUTLER** - I have a question on 2.3?

It is in relation to the use of language on 2.3 Scope of Project with the second dot point passing lanes in up to two locations in each direction and just skipping ahead - but we will go back - that language is used again in section 4: up to two passing lanes. It makes it seem like potentially it might not be two or it's not definite if it is up to two. Will there be two overtaking lanes?

**Mr PECK** - As the design has progressed, the design is much more advanced on stage 1, the Zeehan Highway, where there is one in each direction, nearly opposite each other.

## PUBLIC

**Mr HUNTER** - No. They are pull over bays.

**Mr PECK** - They are pull over bays.

**Ms BUTLER** - So the 'up to' doesn't mean maybe we'll hopefully get there -

**Mr HUNTER** - The up to is so on the stage 2 works. We have two southbound but only one northbound and due to the Serpentine we can't fit one in that area there and there isn't another opportunity in that section to fit another overtaking lane. The idea originally was that we were hoping to, but we can't in reality, as the design has developed and so it's 'up to' two overtaking lanes. We've maintained two in the southbound direction but in reality we will only end up with one in the northbound now.

**Ms BUTLER** - That makes that clearer. Thank you.

**CHAIR** - For the record, we were talking earlier, prior to the hearing, about cycling traffic. I don't think we dealt with it during the hearing. Are you aware of any counts of cyclists at this stage? Could you get that information for us?

**Mr PECK** - Yes. We have a cycling specialist on staff in Infrastructure Tasmania who could provide the Chair with a brief on the cycling that occurs on the West Coast and specifically in the project areas.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. That would be useful information.

**Mr PECK** - We'll take that on notice and we'll provide that to you.

**CHAIR** - It is only in the sense of getting some confirmation as to whether or not cycle tourism is a thing on the West Coast. Therefore, is the shoulder facility on the road that is being proposed likely to be enough to cater for them?

**Mr PECK** - The Department does road and safety upgrades all over the state and we've just recently completed some works in the Coal River Valley. That had the same shoulders we are putting here, but has very high cycling traffic, because there are origins and destinations for cyclists to go from and to. The west coast and the Murchison Highway specifically, the origin and destination for cyclists to get on and off the road are much less overall. You would not expect the same kind of cyclist volumes in this area. But we would be happy to provide the Chair with any information on the cycling in this area.

**CHAIR** - That would be good to verify that. That would be great.

Moving on, anything on page 3?

**Ms BUTLER** - Does it add up, Mr Chair?

**CHAIR** - It does add up. I checked that last night. It does not always add up.

**Mr PECK** - I know.

## PUBLIC

**CHAIR** - Yes, this does add up. Interesting in the p50 base cost estimate, contingency is 11 per cent and with the p90 it is nearly 20 per cent contingency. Is that a general thing between p50 and p90?

**Mr PECK** - Yes. The p stands for 'probability'. As you go through your design, you design out contingency and risk. We have quite advanced designs on stage 1, but we do not on stage 2. So, for this stage of a project, where you have preliminary but not detailed design, these are the appropriate contingency and risk factors for projects.

**CHAIR** - But looking at the escalation percentage, it is 9 per cent on p50 and 10.1 per cent on the p90. Is that because escalation will in fact impact on them equally?

**Mr PECK** - Yes. The escalation factors that the Department uses are given to us by the Australian Government. We report them back to them when we apply for funding in the PPR. Escalation, if you are going to build it in this current year, you have zero escalation. If you are looking to build a project in the future, out year one, out year two, or out year three, then you start to apply the approved by the Australian Government escalation and risk factors to that.

**CHAIR** - Thank you for that explanation. That is interesting. When it comes to things like building schools, we have noticed of late almost a doubling of the cost from \$39 million up to 70-something. But that had out years, as you have just pointed out, that this will not be that long before it is commenced if it gets approval.

**Mr PECK** - Yes. Stage 1 will go to construction this next construction season, but stage 2 will not. There would be escalation applied to that.

**CHAIR** - It talks about the cost estimate including allowances for contingencies and escalations within the current overall project budget of \$43.75 million, including \$20.2 million for previous components already completed. But the profile for the project further down talks about year 2026-27, having a \$2.7 million left over and that includes allowance for a final small project. Yet there is actually \$3.55 million left over, I notice. Given there is \$23.55 million maximum left after you take the \$22.2 million off \$43.75 million, you have -

**Mr PECK** - Yes. The numbers that you are referring to, the \$43.75 million, are commitments.

**CHAIR** - That is right.

**Mr PECK** - The state and the Australian government have committed to those as caps. We might not spend the full amount that has been committed. We will do the works on stage 1 on the Zeehan Highway, and when that job is finished we will report back to the Australian Government on what the expenditure was. That leaves the remaining funding for works on stage 2 of the Murchison Highway.

When Richard goes out to the market and we get tenders back, we will have to review what those are and it could substantially change the start and end point of the road. So, we are designing x kilometres of road but we have to fit that within the project budget. If we spend under, there will be some money not brought out from the Australian Government to state Treasury, because we do that based on milestones. What happens in the out-years, the remnant money could easily vary, because we have no idea at this time because we have not tendered

## PUBLIC

these jobs, what the final outcome will be. It will be less than the \$43.75 million because we never spend right up to the cap. That is not how we try to operate; so, there will be in the out years some left over money.

**CHAIR** - But the left over is \$2.7 million in 2026-27.

**Mr PECK** - The state and the Australian government profile the current year's expenditure and we are pretty solid on those numbers. Every year - twice a year - the state government and the Australian Government get together and we look at out-year profiling. So, when Richard goes to tender on the first half, we say this tender came in at \$8 million so we will have to reprofile the state and Commonwealth funding to match what his expenditure will have to be to meet those contract obligations. When we go out to tender on stage 2, we will have to find out what the contractors come in at and then we will reprofile again.

**CHAIR** - I appreciate that. I am simply pointing out is that the \$2.7 million that is under 2026-27 could be \$3.55 million if you take all of the amount into account. I am wondering why it is only \$2.7 million and not \$3.55 million?

**Mr PECK** - I am not sure. It could be based on preliminary cost estimates.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Everything else looks fine on that page to me, unless there are any other questions? We will go over to Chapter 5, Procurement and Timing. There is no DA necessary, it seems?

**Mr HUNTER** - Not for stage 1, and we are endeavouring not to need one for stage 2. As we finalise that design then that will all come through, but at this time we don't believe it is going to be necessary.

**CHAIR** - Is the only reason there is a possibility it might be a DA is because of the easement situation?

**Mr HUNTER** - No. It would have to be impacted more from the purchasing of land rather than the easement situation. We don't believe we are going to require one, but again that hasn't been defined and we haven't that acknowledgement from the council for stage 2 yet.

**CHAIR** - Have there been any discussions with landowners that might be impacted?

**Mr HUNTER** - Not at this time, no.

**CHAIR** - I ask that because with any project that we consider, one of our reasons for being is that members of the public who feel aggrieved at having their land taken or compulsorily acquired or whatever, have an opportunity to have their voice heard on issues; not necessarily on value, because that is decided by the Valuer-General. There is an opportunity for people to be heard. If you are not sure that there is land being acquired or if land wasn't being acquired it might not present a problem. If you feel that land might be acquired, it would be interesting for us to know now when we come to decide on this, as to whether or not there is likely to be problem.

## PUBLIC

**Mr HEPBURN** - We could probably add, Chair, that the stage 1 works and the associated easement there that we have mentioned for TasNetworks' relocations is the only impact to a private residence or property, and that is where we are DA exempt already. We know that.

**CHAIR** - Would there likely to be any fixtures on that property at the moment like buildings and things that might be impacted, or is it likely to be just open ground?

**Mr HEPBURN** - It is just open ground on the property adjoining the highway, so it is minor.

**CHAIR** - There would be a pole or two on a property.

**Mr HUNTER** - It's a single pole to go up on that property.

**CHAIR** - So it is not likely to be anything significant?

**Mr HEPBURN** - It is not dissimilar to what is there at the moment. However, TasNetworks do require a formal easement now when we are doing relocations as a result of our roadworks, so it is formalising that easement.

**CHAIR** - I can understand that.

**Mr HEPBURN** - The stage 2 works and the acquisition there, although as you know we are in the early stages so we are not quite sure yet, any potential (jump in and correct me if I am wrong, Richard) acquisition along that stage 2 corridor would not likely be impacting on any local members of the public. It would generally be transfers of land between government authorities such as NRE Tasmania.

**Mr HUNTER** - Sustainable Timbers Tasmania. They are the primary holders along that corridor. In stage 2, there aren't any private landowners who could be impacted by our works. It is a matter of resolving what the corridor is, as we finalise those details where we are widening and building the overtaking lanes, et cetera. That's why I can't say absolutely. We are still working through all of that design now.

**CHAIR** - Have you any indication of threatened vegetation or anything like that, of any significance?

**Mr HUNTER** - No, not at this time.

**Ms BUTLER** - I am jumping a bit, but I was going to ask you about potential property acquisition in stage 2 with those proposed upgrades. If it is a swap between agencies and so forth, that shouldn't potentially blow out the budget within any compulsory acquisitions or acquisitions down the track if they are government swaps?

**Mr HUNTER** - Exactly. I wouldn't expect so.

**Mr HEPBURN** - On a past project on the Murchison which I delivered, which was our last section, we had similar transfers of land between the NRE Tasmania so it is just a State Government transfer so generally there is nil cost associated with that acquisition. It is just the minor costs.

**CHAIR** - It is Crown land.

**Mr HEPBURN** - Yes, that is right. There are minor costs associated with the actual title changes and surveying and things like that, but it is very minor in the regard to actual acquisition costs.

**Ms BUTLER** - So none of the land belongs to local council?

**Mr HEPBURN** - My understanding is where we are looking at acquiring land it would be NRE Tasmania - so, the Crown - or Sustainable Timbers Tasmania. In my experience on the past project, both of those entities were happy to hand that land over to us because it meant less maintenance for them.

**CHAIR** - Chapter 6, Risk and Sustainability. The second risk there, construction activities leading to further spreading of the listed weed, gorse. Protocols for sanitising and sterilising construction equipment as it moves from and between sites, especially as it moves offsite altogether to be included in contract documents. I hadn't picked this up in other projects so much, but is gorse a particular issue in this area and the need to contain it is of concern?

**Mr HEPBURN** - It's certainly a problematic weed on stage 1 or in the vicinity of stage 1.

**CHAIR** - The sterilising they are talking about, sanitising?

**Mr PECK** - These are big tracked vehicles. You clean them off so you are not spreading weeds from one site to the next.

**CHAIR** - So it is a powerful hose that is getting rid of mud and slush or whatever?

**Mr PECK** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - I wondered about that.

**Mr HUNTER** - It's managed by the contractor. It is part of the requirements we put on there under the contract. They have to manage it and comply with those requirements.

**CHAIR** - It was the term 'sanitising and sterilising' that I felt - they have got to go through a track path like sheep. Stage 2 development application program implications: what have I got there? It was about accommodation issues. How often do contractors run into problems with housing their workers? If they are bringing them to the west coast, do they normally come down from Burnie every day or do they try to cater for them?

**Mr PECK** - They would have a localised team they would set up.

**CHAIR** - In Tullah or something?

**Mr HUNTER** - It is managed by the contractor; they manage it as they see fit. I am running that Lyell Highway project with Gradco and some of their boys are here in Queenstown and some are in Strahan.

## PUBLIC

**CHAIR** - Are there any housing difficulties?

**Mr HUNTER** - They have not complained to me they had any.

**CHAIR** - Fair enough. We do hear of problems and issues in places like St Helens, for instance where there are lots of Air BnBs, but nothing to rent for three months for workers that are trying to do road works around there.

**Mr HUNTER** - As a Department we leave it with the contractor. It is part of their tender and they have to look at that and put allowances in there to manage it.

**CHAIR** - I wondered whether there was any issue with housing.

**Ms BUTLER** - It is a good question.

**CHAIR** - Nothing extra on the major risks proposed mitigation strategies? Major disbenefits, including likely impacts to the community and environments. Nothing?

**Ms BUTLER** - How will you communicate with the affected people with potential power outages or changes with the removal of those electrical easements?

**Mr HUNTER** - TasNetworks manage all of that part of it. We also have policies within our stakeholder engagement plans, et cetera. TasNetworks manage all the communication regarding their outages because they are managing those works.

**Ms BUTLER** - Also in relation to that, with the actual constructability of the sites, what kind of time delays do you expect? I am not going through step-by-step at the moment, but it is a question we wanted to ask as a general overview. What kind of time delays do you expect for traffic whilst it is under construction?

**Mr PECK** - We stipulate in our contracts there cannot be a delay of over 15 minutes.

**CHAIR** - Fifteen?

**Mr HEPBURN** - That is correct and that is for the total site. Now, if by some chance we ended up having two stages under construction at the same time, we would still give consideration to the accumulative effects. As David said, our individual contracts stipulate a maximum of 15, but we do give consideration to accumulative sites as we are in the Midland Highway at the moment where we have multiple sites.

**CHAIR** - Further to that, seeing as we are talking about time delays. Everybody would realise that traveling up the Midland Highway is a nightmare at the moment because you have 40 kilometres and 60 kilometres and 80 kilometres per hour and rightly so when workers are around. But when you are travelling up early in the morning when there is not a worker in sight and you have a 40 kilometres section on a country road that would normally be 80 kilometres, do you stipulate to your contractors they have to either hood those when they leave the site, so people are not unnecessarily traveling at 40 kilometres per hour for a significant distance when there is no one working?

## PUBLIC

**Mr HEPBURN** - Yes, it is probably more of an issue you do see on sites like the Midland Highway, as opposed to one we are talking about today.

**CHAIR** - Longer distances.

**Mr HEPBURN** - It is certainly something the Department is aware of and we are considering.

**Mr PECK** - We monitor it but we no longer have possession. We give possession of the site to the contractor and they are responsible for managing that. Yes, we have a superintendent we can discuss issues with the contractor. If they have some inappropriate speed designation, we can go to them and talk to them about it, but they actually have possession of the highway.

**CHAIR** - Can you put in the contract that once workers leave the site the speed limits have to put back to a reasonable -

**Mr PECK** - Yes. Obviously, this is an ongoing issue for many a year and this Department does have a contracts branch with lawyers. It is nothing we have any control over, but it is obviously an issue reviewed by the General Manager of State Roads and the contracts branch which looks at those issues.

**Mr HUNTER** - A lot of those speeds are for safety. It may not be there are workers there. There may be a 300-millimetre drop-off, if you are doing 60 and all of a sudden you go over that drop-off, then there is an accident.

**CHAIR** - I understand that entirely. I think a lot of people understand that. It is just that when you have significant distances and do not have drop-offs like that and might have temporary fences -

**Mr PECK** - Everybody wonders. When we drive up the road as private citizens, we wonder why is this still posted at this.

**Mr HEPBURN** - It is something that is on our radar and we are looking at ways we can improve it through our contracts, as you say, because at that point, we do have control over what we put in our contracts and specifications to restrict or limit the contractors when we hand over possession of site. Although I cannot say too much on any major improvements, I can guarantee that is on our radar. We are trying to improve it where possible whilst maintaining the safety, but also giving consideration to the duration of any project. The fact if we do restrict the contractor on-site from what they are doing and how quickly they can do work, it can delay the actual delivery of the project, which then creates another problem for the public who are travelling through this.

**CHAIR** - As long as it is on someone's mind. I mention it because there are plenty of members in the public arena talking about it.

6.2, talking about power poles and the like. Has consideration been given to putting in steel poles, as opposed to wooden because of the capacity of fire to burn them down?

**Mr HUNTER** - That is all on TasNetworks. We are not involved in any of that design. TasNetworks run their own design department. They specify what sort of poles. It is a Titan



## PUBLIC

Pole of some sort they are putting on this stage one pole relocation. But yes, TasNetworks is driving all of that, and they have their own upgrade program going on, totally independent of us anyway.

**CHAIR** - Yes, that is interesting. Same with undergrounding lines rather having them overhead?

**Mr HEPBURN** - We do have some involvement in that particular aspect of undergrounding versus overhead and it generally depends, again, on the length of upgrade we are doing. If we are only doing a single pole replacement it is never considered.

**CHAIR** - You wouldn't look at undergrounding then?

**Mr HEPBURN** - But then on a longer section like, say, a Midland Highway, where you might have 20 kilometres, there is that opportunity to consider at times whether or not we do transfer to a different side of the road or whether we transfer from an overhead to an underground and things like that. Obviously, it comes with considerations in regard to cost and also the effects of what we are doing. There is a substantial difference in an overhead easement and the impacts of the works versus undergrounding. Undergrounding, although much more expensive, is obviously a lot less detrimental on the environments, because your easement width is much more constrained.

**CHAIR** - And mitigation against fire. I suppose it depends on how many houses you are connecting to in that strip and all the rest of it.

Over the page, then. Stakeholder engagement. You have done some work in that respect. Do you want to just give a brief overview of how you have approached that?

**Mr HUNTER** - Yes. Our consultants engage via a notification letter and the response back is there has been no issues raised from the stage one works. This all took place last year.

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr HEPBURN** - It's worth noting that, although this is the first time coming to the committee, this program's been ongoing for quite a while now - 10 or so years, I think David said. The works that we've seen along the Murchison Highway are consistent. We're probably at the point now where most of the local members and the travelling public are quite aware of what this work will look like, because we've seen that happening along that corridor for quite a few years now.

**CHAIR** - Okay. Moving over to 7.3, Directly affected landowners from property acquisition. We've been through a bit of that. You were talking about easements on land, and the ownership was another Government Department. Stage 2 talks about some power poles that need to be relocated as part of the project to allow for the roadworks, likely electricity easements will be required from private properties to facilitate this. Yet, we were talking about Government land. I am bit confused there, on the stage 2 side of it.

**Mr HUNTER** - None of these drawings have gone to TasNetworks yet. We're not clear as to what works will be required for their assets.

## PUBLIC

**CHAIR** - So when we were talking about it before, Zeehan Highway -

**Mr HUNTER** - Yes, with stage 1 we've gone to TasNetworks, and we've got their design, and so we've had an easement that we've had to negotiate for them on their behalf, and that's in hand and in train at the moment. This stage 2 works, we haven't got the drawings at a stage that we can send them to TasNetworks for their review and then their design. Until we get all of that stuff, we don't know what impacts there may be regarding easements, et cetera.

**CHAIR** - Okay. You don't envisage anything significant?

**Mr HEPBURN** - We're not envisaging any acquisition at this stage from private residents. Potentially, depending on the TasNetworks design, maybe some easements over those private residences.

**CHAIR** - Again, it's not likely to involve people not being able to use their facilities because there's an electricity pole running close to their dwellings?

**Mr HEPBURN** - No. In most cases here, because we're doing a standard, minor road widening, it's very minimal impacts in terms of easements. Obviously, any associated construction works are managed very closely by the successful contractor that the Department gets on that job. They'll be working very closely with any of those property owners, in particular, should we be working around their access or something to make sure they maintain access at all times.

**CHAIR** - You mention that access to the Renison Bell Mine is included within the extent of the stage 2 roadworks. Do you envisage any major issues there? Or is this just a bit of pavement that's going to be changed?

**Mr HUNTER** - No, there's works that we are looking at around that mine entrance, and we're just working through that design at the moment, and then we want to sit down with the CEO, et cetera, and just go through what the Department's intending to do, and get their feedback as well in regards to that. That's all in train, but hasn't happened as yet.

**Ms BUTLER** - Beforehand, you mentioned that one of the potential designs on that mine entrance and exit would be a lane for traffic to continue on if there was a right-hand turn going in and out, going into that mine. Was that correct?

**Mr HUNTER** - We are looking at, from the south direction, a slip-lane effectively to turn down into the mine, but we're not putting a formal right-hand turn from the Rosebery direction into the mine.

**Ms BUTLER** - Right.

**Mr HUNTER** - That would require widening the road, and would be quite extensive.

**Ms BUTLER** - So by a slip lane, can you just run through for the record what that means?

**Mr HUNTER** - It is just a widening of the road.

**CHAIR** - Just leads off the main route.

## PUBLIC

**Mr HUNTER** - That's right. It's just an easier turn. So, rather than stopping and having to turn, they can slip down into that mine entry. Apparently a lot of the traffic comes from Zeehan for the mine.

**Ms BUTLER** - So, traffic that's not turning into the mine area can then continue along the highway relatively uninterrupted by that turning-in traffic?

**Mr HUNTER** - Yes, that left turn.

**Mr BUTLER** - Just for the record also, some of those loads coming out of that mine area, I gather, would be quite slow, and they would be heavy vehicles potentially pulling out onto incoming traffic. Will considerations be made with that design to ensure there is adequate visibility for traffic to see that there is a heavy load coming out of that area?

**Mr HUNTER** - There's quite good sight lines there currently, but that is all part of the consideration as we finalise that design.

**Ms BUTLER** - And there will be appropriate signage so that people are aware that coming up there may be heavy vehicles pulling on?

**Mr HUNTER** - Trucks entering and that sort of stuff, yes.

**CHAIR** - There is a bit of an acceleration sort of space?

**Mr HUNTER** - That is to be refined. I can't say at the moment because the consultants are looking at all of that area at the moment.

**Ms BUTLER** - Do we know what kind of traffic flow at the moment is entering and exiting that mine area and whether or not that will be accelerated and what kind of plans they have in so far as capacity?

**Mr HUNTER** - I don't have any of that information. I don't know whether the Department has specific information for the mine.

**Mr HEPBURN** - I know we have had past discussions with the mine on their future plans and some of them are significant, which is why we are incorporating their access into this project. Generally, we don't upgrade accesses as part of our projects, per se. This is a commitment where we are trying to enhance the safety of that access to account for what they think will be quite significant increases in their operations. That being said, we don't have the numbers on hand. We could certainly get them. The future usage is just an assumption that the mining company could make, because in that industry things change daily and we can never be sure whether it is going to go up or down and how it is going to fluctuate over the coming years.

**Ms BUTLER** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Over the page, Chapter 8, there isn't anything in particular there that needs further elucidation. Under noise, further assessment or mitigation was not recommended for

## PUBLIC

stage 2 as the works do not increase the traffic carrying capacity, increased number of carriage ways or widen the highway beyond the road reserve.

Anything on 8.3 - Environments - that we haven't dealt with?

**Ms BUTLER** - We have covered most of that.

**CHAIR** - Threatened fauna, the following page, second paragraph - based on the results of the survey a range of threatened fauna species, et cetera: Tassie devils, spotted quolls, have the potential to be present within the survey area. Is roadkill an issue that you know of in this area or not? Some areas are roadkill central, and others you hardly get any.

**Mr PECK** - It is pervasive around the state. There wouldn't be anywhere where you wouldn't have roadkill, I would say.

**CHAIR** - Yes; but it isn't overtly the case?

**Mr HEPBURN** - It wouldn't be a designated hotspot, but that probably ties in to the surrounding values of the land and also the traffic volumes being a lot less than you might see on the Midland Highway.

**CHAIR** - That's all right. It is just the various steps taken these days to try to reduce it.

**Mr PECK** - There are. If you have an area of small vegetation on one side and small vegetation on the other you assume that the animals are using that as a corridor. This is timbered on both sides the entire length, and the animals would use it everywhere. There is not a treatment you could use for the entire length. If there was a small area of forest on one side and then the other and they are using that as a corridor to go through then some treatments could be proposed in there, but that is not the case.

**CHAIR** - I can understand that. It is just that in some places they have put in a warning system.

**Mr PECK** - We have a specialist in our office who does that, and she has used those treatments mostly up on the Tasman.

**CHAIR** - Huon Highway, I think, in one case.

**Mr PECK** - Jill has looked at all that type of treatments around the state and is probably in the process of analysing the efficacy of those.

**CHAIR** - This is not a hotspot so one expects there is no need at this point. Anything else on threatened flora, vegetation communities? Due to the potential impact of the threatened flora, the Northbound passing lane location has been moved to avoid impact. That was the *Eucalyptus ovata*?

**Mr HUNTER** - Yes. It is on the edge of the serpentine conservation area and we do not want to be interfering with that, the time lines and the permits required are just extensive. It would really slow the project down.

## PUBLIC

**CHAIR** - 8.4 Aboriginal and Historic Heritage. This talks of scatters, rather than any specific major sites. Has this been assessed by Indigenous people or the Department's Indigenous Heritage section? Can we be sure? Obviously, from time to time, projects come before this committee.

**Ms BUTLER** - We do not want another Brighton Bypass.

**CHAIR** - We do not want another Brighton Bypass. Can you give us some comfort this is not likely to be an issue?

**Mr HEPBURN** - Yes. It is standard practice that internally we do have environmental and heritage experts who do what we call a desktop assessment with any of our potential project sites. That would have been undertaken and from there, then we would - that same expert - would consult with Aboriginal and Historic Heritage members to get a confirmation of what they may think could pop up on any set location. In most cases, where we are not anticipating, where there is not too much found, it would simply be an unidentified discovery plan. Then, we still have that measure in place once we get to construction, even if nothing is anticipated. If it is found works stop and then we identify the relevant parties and figure out a way forward.

**Ms BUTLER** - What is an unanticipated discovery plan process? What does that look like, in layman's terms?

**Mr HEPBURN** - That is essentially it. In a lot of cases we are delivering large legs of broken structure around the network. These are areas that are generally already impacted and this is not dissimilar. Even though we are doing minor widening, those areas where widening have already been shoulder-graded, sprayed and things for many years now, under the current maintenance regime. If there was something there to be found, we would assume we or other experts would have found. The unanticipated discovery plan is a secondary contingency, that if something is found, however it might come about, it just means everything stops in that area. It is fenced off and then we go to the relevant experts to raise it with them, identify it and figure out then what it is and how we manage it from there. It can mean things slow down or the project stops, depending on what is found and over what distance, but generally speaking, it does not give us too many concerns. It is more of a backup plan should something pop up that is unexpected.

**Ms BUTLER** - There is a set process or protocol of steps to take if that is triggered?

**Mr HEPBURN** - Yes. That is what that unanticipated discovery plan is. It is a document or process that goes to our successful contractor and they have that on hand so they know what to do, should they find something that may be of relevance.

**Ms BUTLER** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - 8.5 Planning Approvals. Stage 1, the Zeehan Highway, correspondence from the relevant planning authority. West Coast Council confirmed the plans provided satisfied the exemptions including 140-metre stretch outside of that state road casement. Can you give us a bit of an explanation of what that means? 140-metre stretch outside the mapped state-road casement? What is an exemption?

## PUBLIC

**Mr HUNTER** - Under the Roads and Jetties Act, we are exempt through our road corridor. I am actually unclear as to what -

**CHAIR** - Satisfies the exemption -

**Mr HUNTER** - I am unclear as to what that work is specifically, why they've mentioned a 140 metre stretch outside the maps. I'm unclear as to what that is in reference to.

**CHAIR** - I was wondering what that was about.

**Mr HEPBURN** - It's something we may have to take on notice and talk to the consultants. My interpretation, reading it, is it's 140 metre stretch wherever it might be that sits outside the existing mapped state road reserve, but we would have to take that on notice for you.

**CHAIR** - It's not a major thing, I expect, but if you've got answer to it, then provide that along with the other observations on cycling. If we can take that down, Scott? Thank you.

**Ms BUTLER** - Good question, Chair.

**CHAIR** - Chapter 9, conclusion and recommendation. I think we've gone through that, and we've been through the diagrams. I think we've got all the information we need, unless members have any questions?

**Ms BUTLER** - I did want to ask a general question about the heavy vehicle pull over bays. If you could run through some of the design specifications to ensure that there is proper visibility for vehicles that may be travelling along, for instance, the Zeehan Highway. Are heavy vehicles pulling out of one of those pull over bays? How does the design enhance safety features there?

**Mr PECK** - The design is in here.

**Ms BUTLER** - If you're cruising along, sitting on your 80 to 100 kilometres an hour, and then you've got a heavy vehicle pulling out slow in front of you. What design -

**Mr PECK** - This is the Zeehan here. It looks like it's on a long tangent, straight piece of road.

**Ms BUTLER** - They're both on straight sets of road. What kind of design enhancements are featured to ensure that it's as safe as possible?

**Mr HEPBURN** - Sight lines are going to be our key and critical element there. As you're aware, and as we're viewing on the screen, there's not formal features in a way of having major acceleration or deceleration lanes for those trucks. These are, although formal pull-offs to check their loads, they don't have that facility that you would see on a formal truck stop, per se, like we've talked about at Fossey River or on the Midland Highway. What we're trying to achieve in this design in having a safe space for the truck - enough distance for them to pull off, for them to pull over, for them to check their load. They need width, so they can have the truck parked and be on each side of the truck to check their loads, and then get back onto the

## PUBLIC

road safely - namely the Zeehan Highway here. The key feature for the travelling public and the user of that pull-off is the sight lines on approach to it, really.

**Ms BUTLER** - Or for tourists who haven't been on that road before, and unaware that that's a potential risk as well.

**Mr HEPBURN** - Yes. As with any sort of heavy vehicle pull off, or pull over, we do consider all standards in regards to signage. It might be 'trucks entering' or 'be aware of trucks', or whatever they might be, to give advance warning as well as having the adequate sight lines, so it's nothing surprising when someone's travelling the corridor.

**CHAIR** - These Austroads guidelines for the provision of heavy vehicle rest area facilities and the like, that talk about key safety features; safe vehicle movement and access capacity and parking bay size; separation of light and heavy vehicles; and unidirectional flow, all of those sorts of things; is it fair to say that you follow those guidelines?

**Mr HEPBURN** - Yes. Those guidelines would be key in coming up with the design. Obviously, we don't always meet the guidelines, depending on what we're trying to achieve, and where we're trying to achieve it. This particular design is, as we've stated, a load checking pull off. It's not a heavy vehicle rest area. There is quite a difference in the two. Certainly, the standards are what our design consultants are using to come up with a safe spot for these things.

**CHAIR** - You're not cutting any corners, so to speak. Pardon the pun.

**Mr PECK** - There's no reason to cut any corners.

**Mr HEPBURN** - That's right. It's all about safety, really. It's a different element of safety in terms of load checking and securing the load, but if it wasn't safe to have these there we simply wouldn't have them. It is as simple as that.

**CHAIR** - You have on-road markings for something like that, arrows pointing?

**Mr HEPBURN** - Generally speaking, no. We wouldn't have these delineated so much, other than through edge lines and our standard reflective pavement markers (RPMs).

**Ms BUTLER** - Thank you. I wanted to make sure that was on the record.

**CHAIR** - Thank you for that. There are standard questions that we ask at the end of each hearing with these sorts of projects and I need a clear response on them. The first is, does the proposed works meet an identified need or needs or solve a recognised problem?

**WITNESSES** - Yes.

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

**WITNESSES** - Yes.

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

# **PUBLIC**

**WITNESSES** - Yes.

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

**WITNESSES** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - As far as you are aware at this stage.

**Mr PECK** - Value for money is one of the things we try to work through on all of our projects. The works that are involved in a lot of these safety upgrade projects do not show a very high VCR but they are value for money.

**Mr HEPBURN** - That does tie into that previous point of fit for purpose as well.

**CHAIR** - So it is benefit cost ratio?

**WITNESSES** - Yes.

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

**WITNESSES** - Yes, they are.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. They might sound obvious questions but they basically arise from the act and we need to verify that after listening to your submissions. Are there any other statements you wish to make before we finish today?

**Mr PECK** - No, but on behalf of the CEO, Infrastructure Tasmania and the General Manager of State Roads, we appreciate your effort in coming to Queenstown and reviewing this with us.

**CHAIR** - That is our job, like it is your job to come here. That is fine. To close, as I advised you at the commencement of your evidence, what you have said to us today is protected by parliamentary privilege and 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 just repeating what you said to us. Do you understand that?

**WITNESSES** - Yes, we do.

**CHAIR** - Thank you for your attendance. We will now retire to consider the submissions.

**The witnesses withdrew.**

**The committee adjourned at 12.53 p.m.**