

**THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET IN
HENTY HOUSE, LAUNCESTON ON THURSDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2005.**

WEST TAMAR HIGHWAY - SUPPLY RIVER BRIDGE UPGRADE

Mr HEIN POORTENAAR, PROJECT MANAGER; **Mr GEOFF MULCAHY**,
MANAGER PROJECT SERVICES; AND **Mr ROSS CUMMING**, CONSULTANT
(GHD), DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE, ENERGY AND RESOURCES WERE
CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Harriss) - At the outset, gentlemen, we thank you for the site visit earlier today. It is always valuable for us to have a look at on-the-ground matters so we can be more acquainted with the lie of the land in a project such as this, so we do appreciate that. You can lead your evidence however you are prepared and then we will open it for questions and then proceed to hear evidence from other witnesses who are going to appear today.

Mr MULCAHY - Mr Chairman, as Manager, Project Services, I would like to present some background information on this project. Following that, if I may, I will then call my project manager and the design consultant to look at specific issues relating to the project.

The State Government has provided \$3 million to replace the Supply River bridges, this being part of a multimillion dollar program to improve safety on the West Tamar Highway. Works are programmed to commence this summer and be completed by the end of 2006. The Supply River crossing upgrade is high on the list of community priorities on the West Tamar Highway corridor and has the support of the travelling public, transport operators and local and State governments. This has resulted in the project being brought forward by two years. The impetus for the fast-tracking of this project originated at a public meeting at Exeter in October 2003 regarding safety issues on the highway. The West Tamar Council subsequently formed the West Tamar Highway Safety Committee, comprising council and community representatives. I note that this committee has been very active in raising awareness of the issues with politicians and through the media.

The October 2004 draft West Tamar Corridor Study identified over \$150 million of potential works, and the public comment on this document identified the Supply River as a high priority. The Minister for Infrastructure, Bryan Green, addressed a rally in November 2004 and announced that this project would be brought forward and construction would commence in 2005. On 20 December 2004 the minister met committee representatives at the floodway and provided concept designs for the upgrade of the Supply River crossing. He confirmed that works would begin in the 2005-06 financial year and be completed by the end of 2006.

This section of the West Tamar Highway carries 4 000 vehicles per day, including commuter and tourists, and up to 10 per cent heavy vehicles. It forms part of the heavy

transport route from the north-west to the centres of the Tamar and beyond. Growth is expected with the proposed pulp mill and other industries. This project is one of a suite of projects being undertaken to improve safety on the West Tamar Highway. Other projects include the duplication of the highway from Riverside to Legana, and road-widening and realignment of corners between Beaconsfield and Batman Bridge.

Mr Chairman, at this point I would like to call upon my project manager to discuss progress of the project.

Mr POORTENAAR - Mr Chairman, following the original scoping report that was done, GHD were commissioned to design the works. They first reviewed the options and produced an options report. They presented 10 options. That options report was reviewed within DIER by the various stakeholders, sponsors et cetera - Assets. We identified another option that we wanted pursued, and that option was subsequently adopted. The option meets the outcomes originally identified in the corridor study, which had considerable community input. It was also substantially the same concept design distributed for comment in 2004. The design was subsequently developed, a preliminary design and environmental assessments, and is now ready for tender. Often councils require development application, but in this case West Tamar Council does not require one because roadworks are a permitted activity.

Other functions that were carried out included acquisition surveys for the adjacent properties. They are now complete and property negotiations will commence in due course.

A public contact plan which provides community information was developed and will be implemented throughout the project. Key stakeholders include the West Tamar Safety Committee, West Tamar Council, property owners and the community. Key stakeholders are written to individually. A brochure has been prepared and will be letter dropped to 3 000 addresses on the West Tamar. There is also currently a public display at Riverside hall. There will also be advertisements keeping the public up to date and media releases.

It is anticipated that construction will start in February 2006 and it is expected to take six months. Some traffic disruption is unavoidable due to the confined nature of the site. Disruption will consist of speed limits, gravel surfaces and short periods when the traffic is reduced to one lane controlled by lights. The adopted design with its wide formation and fewer structures minimises the duration and extent of this disruption.

I would now like to pass you on to Ross Cumming of GHD who can go through the design aspects in more detail.

Mr CUMMING - Thanks Hein. Mr Chairman, members of the committee, I was the project manager for the GHD design team that prepared the design for this project. The overall project is a 1.4 kilometre length of the existing West Tamar Highway at Supply River, approximately 3 km north of Exeter. A 500-metre length of this section of road is deficient due to a long narrow causeway with five narrow bridges. It is further constricted by a guardrail on both sides. The bridges do not have sufficient capacity to accommodate more than a one-in-five year storm estimated at 75 cubic metres per second and this causes frequent flooding over the road. The bridges were constructed in the 1940s and have reached the end of their service life and are due for replacement.

A separate 300-metre length of this section of road to the south of the Supply River comprises a sharp crest vertical curve, which reduces sight distance. It is proposed to widen the carriageway from the current 6.7 metres to 8 metres. This is the standard for this category and usage of road. The design brief included allowance for cyclists and a 1-metre sealed shoulder included in the design provides for this. The 500-metre long causeway currently has guardrail along both sides. By providing a 5.5 metre wide verge and gentle batters, most of the guardrail can be eliminated. This improves safety and amenity and reduces maintenance. A short section of guardrail will still be required over the Supply River, as that is the main channel of the floodway, including the kerb at the northern end of the floodway where gentle batters were not adopted due to the potential impact on the vegetation adjacent in the Supply River.

The five existing bridges within the causeway section will be replaced with three triple-cell box culverts 1.8 metres high by 3.6 metres wide by 3 metres at the Supply River main stream, the secondary stream and the tertiary stream, and two hot culverts will be installed at the two intermediate streams. The road surface level across the causeway will also be raised by up to 750 millimetres to achieve a combined culvert capacity of 200 cubic metres per second. This is included for a one-in-100-year storm event which is the standard for this category and usage road.

The crest curve to the south will be lowered by up to 1.2 metres to provide the required sight distance for 100 kph design speed. In addition to these other works, Rookery Road junction, which is 400 metres north of the Supply River bridge at the northern limit for this project, will be improved to provide safe turning for semitrailers. It will also be sealed.

Environmental, European and Aboriginal heritage assessments were conducted and no particular issues were found. The road follows the existing alignment and apart from a few trees needing to be removed for a widened carriageway, plus some clearing for relocation of an existing overhead Aurora line, impacts are negligible.

CHAIR - Thanks, gentlemen. We will open up for questions but before I do can I just acknowledge Kerry Finch, who is the member for Rosevears. The area which we looked at this morning and the following project is in Kerry's electorate, so we welcome Kerry to the hearing. It is important that you are here to see evidence in regard to these projects.

Mr FINCH - Thanks.

CHAIR - With that, committee members, we are open for questions.

Mr HALL - Mr Cumming gave evidence in relation to the northern end of the works. Do we still have some guardrail there?

Mr CUMMING - That's correct; 150-odd metres on each side.

Mr HALL - Is there any provision in that section for cyclists and pedestrians?

Mr CUMMING - Yes, the 1-metre sealed verge continues right through.

Mr HALL - It goes right through?

Mr CUMMING - Yes. In addition to that there will be a half-metre verge on the outside of the guardrail for emergency pedestrian access.

Mr HALL - You said that the actual width of the roadway and the previous 6.7 metres existing pavement is going to be replaced by two 3-metre lanes. That is actually reduction in width, isn't it, in that respect?

Mr CUMMING - Well, it is two 3-metre lanes plus 1 metre on the shoulder.

Mr HALL - I understand that, yes.

Mr CUMMING - The 6.7 metres was overall, including shoulders.

Mr HALL - Yes. In terms of Australian Road Standards is that a State standard or is that consistent with what would normally be done in other reconstructions.

Mr CUMMING - That would comply with typical standards and would be a State roads policy for that usage of road - that amount of traffic and that category of road.

Mr HALL - Why did you decide to do away with the guardrails? Is it from a safety point of view or will the batters provide that safety blanket?

Mr CUMMING - The guardrails are necessary for safety if a steep batter is provided at either side of the road. As an alternative to that, to reestablish the safety the guardrails can be eliminated providing there is a wider verge and flat batters. So it is a trade-off cost. The department's feeling was it was better to get rid of the guardrail if possible for visual reasons and basic amenity. The guardrail creates a constriction on a road whereby it virtually boxes in all the traffic within the confines of the guardrail.

Mr HALL - You are happy that the 1-metre lane provides safe access for cyclists and pedestrians? That is enough in your view?

Mr CUMMING - In my view, given the direction from the departmental officers, yes.

Mr HALL - If a separate cycling lane was built what width would that be? If one has been done on other roadworks, for example, what width is required?

Mr CUMMING - I am not a specialist on cycling lanes but my understanding is they need to be in the order of 2 metres wide.

Mr HALL - That is the point I was getting at. We only have 1 metre here but it is a very popular cycling route.

Mr CUMMING - Sorry, I misunderstood your question. A cycling lane that is built as a dedicated structure is basically 2 metres wide because it has 1 metre each way.

Mr HALL - Yes, right.

Mr CUMMING - I have a mental picture of the cycling lane in Hobart that goes around the foreshore. It is 2 metres wide but it is only 1 metre each way.

Mr HALL - You talked about heritage values and the studies that have been done, how much vegetation has to be removed?

Mr CUMMING - There is possibly a dozen to 15 trees to be removed.

Mr HALL - And are they of heritage value or environmental value?

Mr CUMMING - No, there was no environmental value put on those trees.

Mr HALL - So can you describe what species they are mainly that have got to go?

Mr CUMMING - I would need to refer to the flora report but there were some boxwoods. There are a lot of weeds in that area and there will be a couple of small eucalypts at the river itself. Some of those are required for clearance purposes for the relocated Aurora overhead line.

Mr HALL - So there is a bit of vegetation on both sides being removed, is there, or just on the eastern side.

Mr CUMMING - It is mostly on the eastern side.

Mr HALL - Okay. And in terms of Aurora, how many power poles?

Mr CUMMING - Nine are to be relocated.

Mr HALL - Would Mr Poortenaar elaborate to the committee in regard to traffic disruption. As you say, there are 4 000 vehicles per day on that particular road and it is fairly busy. What were the plans in terms of minimum traffic disruption?

Mr POORTENAAR - There will inevitably be some disruption. Construction is expected to take six months. Given the fairly generous formation that we have constructed they would be able to construct first one side, put in half the boxed culverts and turn the traffic onto that while they demolish the remaining structures and widen on the other side. Speeds will be reduced and there will be gravel surfaces but there will generally be two lanes of traffic open, except for short periods when cranes will be on site lifting the box culverts et cetera. We have shortened the construction period by using boxed culverts rather than bridges. If we were constructing bridges it would be a much longer construction period and more disruption.

Mr HALL - I noticed from this morning's inspection that the current speed limit is 80 kph through. Will that remain in totality for the length?

Mr POORTENAAR - Yes. We generally construct the roadworks and then review the speed limit. There is actually an 80 kph speed limit over the causeway and round the corner. The bend will still remain at a design speed of roughly 90 kph. The decision

will be made by traffic and safety as to whether it is worth raising the speed limit to 90 kph or 100 kph or keeping it at 80 kph.

Mr HALL - In reference to the boxed culverts, as we noted on our inspection this morning, there are five creeks coming through there as part of the supply catchment and quite a big flood plain. Are you confident that the number of boxed culverts that you're putting in there can handle a one-in-a-hundred-year flood? Is that the case?

Mr CUMMING - That's correct.

Mr POORTENAAR - Theoretically, given the design standards, it will cater for a one-in-one hundred-year flood.

Mrs NAPIER - Coming back to the issue of the width of the road, my question in terms of policy is probably to Mr Poortenaar. I am just reading from a note received from the West Tamar Council in relation to the width of the road. This road is a designated freight route, isn't it?

Mr POORTENAAR - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - The department's draft Tasmanian road hierarchy targets apparently indicate that future road construction and major repairs will be undertaken to improve each road to meet its targets. Regional freight road targets include where there are two lanes each is at least 3.5 metres wide, with up to a 1 metre sealed shoulder and an unsealed shoulder to take the total shoulder to 1.6 metres. While we were standing there having a look, at the site inspection, we were all fairly conscious of the high ratio of trucks that were passing to and fro. Why is it that your department is recommending a 3-metre wide lane rather than 3.5 metres?

Mr POORTENAAR - This was dictated by the infrastructure section of our department. They advised that, for the moment - and I understand that the West Tamar Council was anxious to get the lane width increased to 3.5 metres - the department's current policy is to keep it at 3 metres. That falls within that category of road which is a freight category 2 and for those vehicles per day the 3-metre lane applies. If traffic increases above the threshold - and I am not entirely sure what the limit is - then the whole highway will need to be increased to 3.5 metres. Generally we would not increase a short 500-metre section of highway to 3.5 metres and leave the rest at 3 metres. If at some future stage the traffic increased and the department decided to increase the standard of road to 3.5 metre lanes and 1-metre shoulders then they would have to increase the width of the whole highway. Along this section of road it would be a fairly easy operation just to go along and widen the road by 0.5 metre.

Mrs NAPIER - The status of the Tasmanian road hierarchy and targets is not an operational document?

Mr POORTENAAR - I am not entirely sure. Geoff, you might be able to answer that one.

Mr MULCAHY - The hierarchy document is stage 1 to 5, depending on the category of road. Each category has its own standards and they are a departmental standard. My understanding is that the section of road that we are looking at now, the Supply River

section of road, is consistent with that hierarchy document and the standard that goes with it.

Mrs NAPIER - Your document indicates that two-way traffic is 3 700; percentage of trucks, 11.3 - it was certainly higher than 11.3 per cent when we were standing there; it must have been organised for us - what would the traffic flow need to be to make it a category 1 freight route?

Mr MULCAHY - I couldn't answer that. I could take that on notice, if you like, but I haven't that information to hand.

Mrs NAPIER - I request that information - through you, Mr Chairman.

Mr POORTENAAR - If I may answer that, I believe that the road will always be a category 2 road which is a freight route. Category 1 is a national highway, I believe.

Mrs NAPIER - This is a top-level freight route other than a national highway?

Mr POORTENAAR - This is a freight route but if vehicles per day were to increase above a certain threshold, and I am not too sure what it is, the road section would increase to a 3.5 carriageway and 1-metre shoulders.

Mrs NAPIER - Through you, Mr Chairman - I am interested in what the criteria would be under current policy as to what the traffic flow would need to be in order for it to require the 3.5.

Mr POORTENAAR - We can take that on notice.

CHAIR - If I could just add to that very quickly, your own document suggests to us that there is a 5 per cent per annum growth rate anyway so we can do some sums on that as to how quickly we might get to the level that you provide for us.

Mrs NAPIER - We could ask for projections.

CHAIR - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - The council has also drawn to our attention that the Austroads guide to the geometric design of rural roads indicates that the desirable lane width on rural roads is 3.5 metres and it recommends for roads carrying over 3 000 vehicles per day that lane widths be 3.5 with a total shoulder width of 2.5 and shoulder seal widths of 1.5, which would require a minimum seal width of 8.5 metres. It seems to me that we have two documents here that are recommending 3.5 width lanes not the 3 metres that we are using, and I think you also indicated that the current road width is 6.7. I take it that that is between the two white lines that are on the road. Can you do a calculation on that?

Mr CUMMING - Total width is beyond the white lines.

Mrs NAPIER - Right, okay.

Mr POORTENAAR - At the moment it would be two 3-metre lanes and a 0.3-metre shoulder on either side.

Mr MULCAHY - So we are going from 6.7 to 8 in this proposed new works.

Mrs NAPIER - Is it policy that cars and trucks are allowed to travel in a bicycle lane?

Mr MULCAHY - My understanding is no, that is not the policy.

Mrs NAPIER - I got pinged the other day because my wheels just touched a double line - I did three points for it - a very officious policewoman down there on the West Tamar, I must say. I couldn't believe it. Is it an offence for my wheel to touch that white line and to go into the bicycle lane?

Mr MULCAHY - I am sure that policewoman was just doing her job.

Mrs NAPIER - I am sure she was too.

Mr MULCAHY - I couldn't comment on the legality side of exactly where that wheel should be. My understanding is that traffic should be within the traffic lane and should not be encroaching on a bicycle lane, however that should be checked by the police - the regulations.

Mrs NAPIER - Regarding road policy, you would design a road to ensure that it fits with the laws of the road to be applied by police. Do you have an understanding as to that?

Mr POORTENAAR - Regarding the legality?

Mrs NAPIER - Yes.

Mr POORTENAAR - I would imagine that legally you would be required to stick within the lane but there would normally be some leeway.

Mrs NAPIER - I raise it because when we were standing there, and I have tried to drive a van actually and met a truck coming at me on that section of road, it is very tight, allowing for the fact that we will not have as great a section with the rails on either side but having said that, would you not agree that 3 metres is fairly tight on that road with the amount of traffic that is there, including truck traffic and school buses?

Mr POORTENAAR - It is, but it is the department's policy to have a 3-metre lane at this time. I would need to probably get a response from the Infrastructure section which briefed us on this project and dictated the carriageway width but I believe if they decided to have 3.5 metre lanes then it would be a major expense to widen the whole highway. Obviously on this section of highway it would not be a huge issue but on some of the steeper, more windy bits it would be a large expense.

Mrs NAPIER - If we took this project, which includes, as I understand it, the reduction of the crest, some 300 metres I think you pointed out further south, is it not true that this is one project amongst some - I do not have the figure in my head - 25 other projects that

have been identified for the road to be done over quite a long period of time, probably 20 years, to get it all done?

Mr POORTENAAR - I believe so, yes.

Mrs NAPIER - Is it not likely that where subsequent projects are brought onto line by the Government and funded, if a 3.5-metre width is to be used then it would be just progressively added to road project as each section came up?

Mr POORTENAAR - I believe the same applies with the works that are then going to be progressed within the next year towards Beaconsfield, that they will have a 3-metre lane.

Mrs NAPIER - I accept that. I request some information on why the 3-metre lane has been chosen, given that the traffic rate and the danger issues that have been identified with this road all seem to suggest to me that a 3.5 is more appropriate, if we follow two documents, one being the Australian Guide to the Geometric Design of Rural Roads and the other being the department's own report, Tasmanian Road Hierarchy and Targets. In terms of the safety issues on this road, I am a bit surprised that we are not looking at 3.5. There was one other question.

CHAIR - Just before you go off that if I can come in to list the same issue, I was going to raise that matter of the 3.5-metre lanes. Mrs Napier has referred to the West Tamar Council's submission to us, and we will get information from them when they give us evidence a little later, but, gentlemen, the document that Mrs Napier referred to, and that is your own draft Tasmanian Road Hierarchy and Targets, according to the council indicates that future road construction and major repairs will be undertaken for each road to meet the targets and the regional freight road targets include that 3.5 metres which she spoke about. Is that the case from your best recollection? Is that what is set out in your own document?

Mr MULCAHY - I would not like to go into details because frankly I cannot recall what our document talks about, however, certainly from our Transport Infrastructure Branch where that information would come from, our design is consistent with that particular document and I understand it is a category 2 road.

CHAIR - Clearly with the information that Mrs Napier is seeking we will be able to clarify that in our own minds. We will hear from Mr Wright from the council a little later so that we can flesh that out a bit.

Mr HALL - Just in the same vein, too - sorry, Sue - just to get that clear, the West Tamar Highway is a category 2 road from Riverside right through to Beauty Point, basically its whole length?

Mr POORTENAAR - Yes. The vehicles per day would vary on the various sections, so I am not entirely sure.

Mr HALL - So while we are talking about this, this lane width, for example, the new four-lane part that is being constructed at the moment, what width are the lanes there? They are 3.5s, aren't they?

Mr POORTENAAR - I don't know off the top of my head.

Mr HALL - From my memory, they are, so it just seems to me to be rather odd that we are now getting beyond that point and are now reducing the lane width, even though the road is still a category 2 road from one end to the other.

Mr POORTENAAR - Yes, but it is decided by both the category and the vehicles per day. The vehicles per day between Exeter and Launceston would be much more than from Exeter northwards.

Mrs NAPIER - Following up on that same issue, it has been drawn to our attention that the preliminary concept drawings released in December 2004 for the project had sealed pavement widths of 10 metres between the guardrails for the causeway section of the road, so there appears to have been a change brought in in the final plans that we have. Can you tell me why that was so?

Mr POORTENAAR - The original concept had guardrail extending for 500 metres. When you have guardrail extending that long there is a risk that a car breaking down will not make it to the end of the guardrail and therefore will block traffic, so that 2-metre lane was effectively a breakdown lane. Now that we have reduced the guardrail length to 140 metres that is not so much of an issue, so basically we no longer need the 2 metre-wide breakdown lane and 1 metre is sufficient for cyclists. The risk with a 2 metre shoulder is it ends up looking like a parking bay and people will use it to park, something that we do not necessarily want to encourage.

Mrs NAPIER - Do you recall with the 10-metre section, when you had that there - and I accept that argument for why the change has been made - was it 3-metre widths or 3.5 in the original drawings?

Mr POORTENAAR - That was 3-metre lanes and 2-metre shoulders.

Mrs NAPIER - Okay. I notice there is a 20 per cent contingency factor, half a million dollars out of the \$3 million program. Why would there be such a high contingency factor?

Mr POORTENAAR - That contingency is higher than normal. Normally at the detailed design stage it would be closer to 10 or 15 per cent.

Mrs NAPIER - That is an extra 0.5, isn't it, for each of the laneways?

Mr POORTENAAR - Yes.

Mr CUMMING - If I could add something there, during the estimates for construction we did put in a contingency of 20 per cent to allow for the fact that the construction industry rates were changing quite rapidly over the past 12 months, and it was to basically apply a global increase to the unit rates that we used for the construction estimates.

Mrs NAPIER - I accept that, with the amount of competition that is around at the moment, but if we did move to 3.5 lanes, how much would it add to the cost of that pavement section?

Mr CUMMING - I would have difficulty pulling a figure straight out of the air for that, but I can take that question on notice, Mr Chairman.

Mrs NAPIER - That would be appreciated.

Mr POORTENAAR - It would not only be the pavement. The earthworks and the culverts would also need to be extended by half a metre.

Mrs NAPIER - I accept that, because I do not want to give up the metre for the cyclists. Could we have an indication of what the cost would be if we moved to 3.5-metre laneways.

CHAIR - Just while we are on that contingency matter, when I look further up the column there is an allowance of \$160 000 for 'miscellaneous'. If you factor those two together, isn't 'miscellaneous' in fact 'contingency'? If that is the case, then we are talking about a very substantial contingency component for the project.

Mr CUMMING - The miscellaneous item there is a methodology to include a number of smaller items that are not appropriate to identify in a simplified estimate structure like that. The actual detailed estimate that DIER has is carried out using a schedule which may have 200 items in it. We have condensed those items down to a manageable number. 'Miscellaneous' would be small things such as fencing, if it is not included elsewhere, or some specific items, which I would need to go back to my detailed estimates for. They weren't just contingency items; they were specific items that basically haven't been identified explicitly in that presentation.

CHAIR - I think I am reasonably relaxed about that. It would be helpful to me, and maybe other committee members as well, if you identified some of those issues as provisional sums, but it might be, as you say, there could be a range of issues. When we get it presented to us like that, that in my mind is no different to a contingency. Maybe it ought to be identified as 'provisional sums' and a number of components of the project identified so that we can be familiar with where we are at. At this stage I am reasonably comfortable.

Mrs NAPIER - I thought it might be worth getting on the record an issue we discussed at the site inspection and that was why there wasn't a realignment of the road, particularly to take account of the corner near the river bridge.

Mr CUMMING - When we did the concept design report for the project we looked at 11 options for providing the outcome. One of those was to offset the road significantly to the west to enable that curve to be improved. By doing that, it introduces a lot more earthworks because the benefit of the existing causeway earthworks can't be utilised. Also, the length of the road needs to be several hundred metres longer, to get off the straight onto the new alignment and then off the new curve back onto the new alignment at the northern end. The end result with that option is that the construction project cost is much higher.

Mrs NAPIER - I just thought it was worth having that put on the record.

Mr HALL - It is worth also putting on the record in reference to the boxed culverts that are going to go in - and I forget how many there were, Mr Poortenaar.

Mr POORTENAAR - Three triple cells

Mr HALL - We talked about the flooding from the western side and the debris that comes down there. As we know, sometimes the debris can in fact block up a boxed culvert, therefore causing more flooding. How do you mitigate that debris coming down and blocking those culverts?

Mr POORTENAAR - Debris is a problem in some rivers with boxed culverts. With this particular river it was not believed, given the relatively flat grades and the nature of the existing channel, which is fairly small and very wooded, that there is a significant amount of debris coming down it. If debris does lodge against the culvert, it will be part of standard maintenance to clean it out periodically.

Mr HALL - Obviously a new boundary fence would have to be erected on the western side? You wouldn't do anything there try to stop debris coming through?

Mr POORTENAAR - The debris will catch whether it is in a grille or in a culvert. The culverts will have stock guards across them and they will catch some debris, so the debris will not get lodged within the culvert. It will be lodged on the upriver side. Generally, it is cleaned out, chainsawed and taken away.

Mr HALL - I presume budgeted costs for boundary fencing is probably included in miscellaneous, is it not?

Mr CUMMING - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - I have got one extension to that discussion we were having about the traffic flow projections. What information have you been provided with concerning the increase in traffic flow likely as a consequence of the decision in relation to the pulpmill?

Mr POORTENAAR - I am not entirely sure. At the moment I believe there are a number of traffic impact assessments being done regarding the pulpmill and I am not sure what the results are or whether they are still in progress.

Mrs NAPIER - Have the implications of the establishment of the pulpmill been taken into account in the design and decision about the widths of the carriageways?

Mr POORTENAAR - I think it is accepted that traffic will increase, whether at the standard 3 or 4 per cent or much more. Certainly the percentage of commercial vehicles would increase or change. I am not too sure that is maybe something we can address with the road crash question on notice.

Mrs NAPIER - If we could have an indication of the projections for the increase in traffic, increased number of trucks and commercial vehicles using that road associated with the pulpmill, it would be appreciated.

CHAIR - Anything further? Is there anything in relation to the Rookery Road intersection which you want to expand upon because that is part of that which we are considering here today, other than what you have covered in your preliminary contribution?

Mr MULCAHY - Mr Chairman, I have nothing further to add there. Perhaps Ross, in the design aspects, can provide comments about Rookery Road.

Mr CUMMING - Mr Chairman, basically the evidence I have previously presented was to increase the geometry of that junction to provide safe turning for semitrailers. The necessity for that is that the semitrailers turning into that junction currently have to actually turn out across the centre of the road to accommodate that turn. It is fairly minor work. It will include extension of the turning lines to the south, some new pavement in that extra area, an extension of an existing culvert and applying a seal on the junction area which is currently unsealed. That is again for safety reasons.

CHAIR - Has the springtime flora study been completed and is it in your report?

Mr CUMMING - Yes, Mr Chairman, that has been completed about three weeks ago. It was completed just after we prepared our report and the outcome of that study was that there were no endangered or rare species found.

Mr MULCAHY - In closing I would like to highlight that this project has considerable merit. It improves road safety by providing a wider road, flooding is reduced, 20-year pavement life is restored, the bridges are upgraded to contemporary standards relating to structural capacity, geometry and hydraulics. I would also like to note that the relative high cost of the project is largely due to the number of structures and the considerable earthworks in a relatively short distance required to raise and widen the causeway.

We would also like to take this opportunity to request of the committee that DIER be given approval to tender the documents at this stage with the rider in the documents that the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works' approval has not been given.

CHAIR - With regard the last comment, Mr Mulcahy, the committee has a policy which we have agreed upon in the past that if a department wishes to proceed down that path with a rider in the advertising process, then it is up to the department to run the risk, if I can put it that way, in the event that the committee doesn't recommend approval of the project. We have that as a position, which we have previously discussed. Unless my colleagues have any opposition to that, it is just a matter of process for you to follow if you wish.

Mr MULCAHY - Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Mrs NAPIER - I think it's called a metre of extra road, isn't it?

Laughter.

CHAIR - Thank you very much gentlemen, we appreciate that. If we could have Mr Wright from the Council and Ms Holmdahl, if she is going to give evidence as well, as part of your safety committee.

Mr WRIGHT - Mr Chairman, I am here in two roles: representing the West Tamar Council and also as a member of the West Tamar Highway Safety Committee.

Mr RAYMOND WRIGHT, TECHNICAL SERVICES MANAGER, WEST TAMAR COUNCIL AND **Ms CHRISTINA HOLMDAHL**, CHAIR, WEST TAMAR HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Welcome to you both. Ray, you're familiar with the processes of this committee, having been here before, so please share your evidence with the committee and again we will open up for questions when you have completed.

Mr WRIGHT - Thank you very much for the opportunity to present details of the Council's submission. Council confirms the urgent need for the upgrading of the West Tamar Highway - Supply River Floodway, to improve the level of safety for all road users.

As early as 1999, the West Tamar Council identified safety problems at this location and in November 2004, submitted to DIER, as part of the corridor-study consultation, this project as the highest-priority project on the West Tamar Highway.

As referred to in the department's evidence, a public meeting in Exeter in October 2003 clearly indicated the community's views on safety users on the highway and this particular section of the highway was highlighted by a number of speakers there. The narrow width of the road between the guardrails, the amount of heavy traffic, and the increasing volume of traffic on that road, were issues pointed out by the community.

This is part of a regional heavy freight route. It is recognised in the Northern Tasmanian Integrated Transport Plan as a regionally important freight route. It carries about 4 000 vehicles per day and, as indicated by the department, 10 per cent of these are trucks, which is a fairly high percentage of commercial vehicles. Also a reasonable growth rate, something like 5 per cent, was indicated.

The Vehicle and Traffic (Vehicle Operations) Notice 2002 identified this section of the highway as part of an approved route network for vehicles with road-friendly suspension, B-double trucks and truck and dog trailer combination vehicles. In other words, the larger heavy vehicles are permitted to use this section of the highway.

Council has two major concerns with the project. One is the width of lanes being provided on this road, given that the structures on the road are long life - we are looking at 100 year life on bridges and so on - and therefore the width of those bridges ought to suit future needs of the highway over that life time.

The lane widths recommended in the department's draft, Tasmanian Road Hierarchy and Targets, for the traffic volumes, value of freight, for this road is 3.5 metres wide with a 1-metre sealed shoulder. Similarly the Austroads Guideline for Geometric Design of Rural Roads indicates for vehicles over 3 000 vehicles per day on rural roads, a lane width of 3.5 metres. That is only a guide, it is not a mandatory document, but it certainly gives an indication of recommendations for lane widths where you have heavy traffic and large numbers of vehicles per day.

The second issue is making adequate provision for cyclists and pedestrians, although there are not a large number of pedestrians, to safely move through the area over the

Supply River itself, where guardrail is proposed. Given the narrow lanes of only 3 metres and a 1-metre sealed shoulder we consider the width at the moment is inadequate for the safety of cyclists through that area and there is not much opportunity for pedestrians to safely walk through.

Trucks are generally 2.5 metres wide - the legal maximum width nowadays - and you have the mirrors outside that. You need some clearance to a pedestrian or a cyclist. The Austroad guidelines for cyclists indicates a cycling envelope of 1 metre because cyclists do wobble and meander around a little bit and then you need some clearance outside that envelope to the traffic lane.

Council certainly supports this project. We would like to see it go ahead at the earliest possible date but would also request that adequate consideration be given to the width of the lanes and to provision for cyclists and pedestrians to make sure that we end up with the safest possible.

CHAIR - Thanks, Ray. Ms Holmdahl, is there anything you want to add at this stage?

Ms HOLMDAHL - On behalf of the West Tamar Highway Safety Committee, I would just like to endorse the comments that Ray has made and we certainly subscribe to the views of the council. I also believe that the community would place a great priority on seeing this project brought forward as quickly as possible, and any further delays to the project are really quite undesirable. The problems that the users of this road face every day don't go away with the delays to it, so the community certainly wants to see this project go ahead.

The only other point that I didn't fully understand was one of those that we brought up in our submission. The West Tamar Highway Safety Committee submission points out that there is a section of the road at the Supply River near the northern end of the project and it provides for an 8-metre wide sealed pavement between steel guardrails and has no provision for the safe passage of pedestrians through this area. Could that be clarified. Will there be in the plan safe provision for pedestrians in that area?

CHAIR - On that matter, if I might, my understanding is clearly from the design which we have in front of us that there will be a 3-metre traffic lane, still a 1-metre sealed shoulder and a half-metre unsealed verge and then outside the guardrail, as one of our previous witnesses indicated, there will be provision for emergency pedestrian - I think was the terminology used - so that there is capacity outside the guardrail for pedestrians to adequately negotiate that section of the highway, as I recall. In fact we can get that clarification now. The project manager has been sworn. Is there anything you want to clarify in that regard now while we are on that matter?

Mr CUMMING - There is emergency access behind the guardrail of approximately half a metre. It is not designed for a pedestrian way as such because pedestrian ways themselves bring on a lot of other design requirements, like maximum grade. It is not specifically designed as a pedestrian way but there is an area there which can be used as an emergency pedestrian access in the event of an accident of someone trying to get off that area without having to walk within the guardrail areas.

Ms HOLMDAHL - I suppose the question has to be asked then: if there is adequate pedestrian provision on the other part of the roadworks, why not on that particular section? Why is it just emergency pedestrian access?

Mr CUMMING - Mr Chairman, I would have to refer that back to the appropriate officer in the department for guidance on that.

CHAIR - Okay. That is something which the committee will be interested. The matter of the 8-metre seal clearly suggests that we have two 3-metre lanes and a metre of shoulder on each side of the road in that area of the guardrail, so we then need to address our minds to whether a 1-metre sealed shoulder is adequately safe for pedestrians to walk within the guardrail area.

Mrs NAPIER - Is there any reason that there could not be that additional half a metre within the guardrails. As I understand the construction, you have boxed culvert formation underneath, there is going to be earth on top of that and that also allows for the fact that it is going to be, as you say, at least half a metre outside the guardrails for emergency access. Is that half a metre only because that is as wide as it is anticipated the box culverts would extend or is it likely that you would have earthworks extending further than that half a metre that we are talking about?

Mr CUMMING - Where the cross-section of the road includes the guardrail, the earthworks need to be taken beyond the guardrail to provide purchase for the guardrail foundations, so that extra area behind the guardrail is there by default. There is certainly no technical reason why that area cannot be made wider. It does have implications on the length of the box culvert and the volume of earth and the financial grades. There is no technical reason why we cannot provide it; it would mean extra area.

Mrs NAPIER - So what you are saying is that the boxed culverts would have to have extra length and that there would be some additional fill on top of that?

Mr CUMMING - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - Can I ask the councillor, how much pedestrian activity is there? I would not dare walk there at the moment but what planning does the community have in relation to the physical activity and the Council of Tasmania's program, increased levels of physical activity to tackle the issues of diabetes, obesity and all those other issues that are about to send our health bills skyrocketing? Is the ability to walk on that road part of the infrastructure issue for those kind of programs?

Mr WRIGHT - Our observations are that there is not a lot of pedestrian activity there and council does not have any format policy that identifies that as a pedestrian route. There has been general discussion about the need for a pedestrian link all the way from Launceston to Greens Beach ultimately and I had various stages of that discussion with the department concerning the upgrade from Cormiston Creek to Legana for instance. It may not always follow the highway in the Rosevears area. There have been no discussions about it following Rosevears Drive or the walkway in that area. There are talks at the moment, and suggestions from the community, about a footway linking Beaconsfield and Beauty Point, also along the section of this highway, so it is about making provision for the future to ensure that there is adequate space.

I am not suggesting, and the committee is not and representatives of the committee are not suggesting, that there be a constructed footpath, just that there is sufficient safe space for somebody to walk through that area. Certainly before you get to the guardrail section, the embankment cross-section does provide that capacity because there, is a very wide, reasonably flat, earthfill embankment there so there is space to walk alongside the highway safely.

Mrs NAPIER - How would you view the community's view in terms of the importance of pedestrian access?

Ms HOLMDAHL - I agree with the point Ray just made. We are after consistency. I would not do it at the moment, but if somebody does choose to walk on that highway they should have safe provision of passage right across that section and not suddenly come to one particular section where it is emergency passageway only.

Mrs NAPIER - Thank you.

Mr HALL - Mr Wright on the final page of your submission you talk about, in italics, where there are two lanes, each at least 3.5 metres wide, with up to 1-metre sealed shoulder, and yet the next sentence down talks about the lane width being 3.5 metres with a shoulder seal width of 1.5, which sort of reduces each one to 0.75, does it not? Am I interpreting that correctly?

Mr WRIGHT - That is correct. That would be the interpretation of the Austroads document. The shoulder seal width of 1.5, as I read it, is for both shoulders, so it is 0.75.

Mr HALL - So it is only 0.75. That is obviously narrowing the whole job up further, isn't it, which I think would not be sufficient.

Mr WRIGHT - It is talking about a 3.5 metre lane, though, with a 0.75 shoulder, whereas the department's document talks about a 3.5 metre lane with a 1-metre sealed shoulder, both of which are wider than the proposed 3 metre and 1-metre.

Mr HALL - I just wanted to clarify that, thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you very much.

JIM OCKERBY, RESIDENT OF CAMBRIDGE STREET, LAUNCESTON WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Welcome to the committee. We are aware that you have had some conversations with Mr Donnelly about appearing before the committee. We have this one page written submission plus the diagram with your suggestions as to a realignment of the highway rather than continuing on the existing alignment and upgrading it, so please feel free to share with us your concerns about the project.

Mr OCKERBY - Thank you, Mr Chairman, and to the other members of the committee I thank you for your time. I am not familiar with these sort of activities very much. It is only the second time that I have ever done it in 72 years of livelihood on this planet. I am very concerned as to what is going on at the moment in relation to the planned so-called improvements.

We are in an era of B-doubles and various sizes of machinery on the road. I see no improvement coming out of the money that is going to be spent if we go ahead with what is there at this stage. It will not alleviate any of the traffic-flow problems. I believe the road should be totally realigned and I have shown it in the sketch that I have put forward. I also stated that it should be a three-lane aspect, thus giving overtaking chances to vehicles. As I say, with the B-doubles and their 500 hp to 600 hp motors, it is not going to improve much by continuing around that long, sweeping bend. The people of the West Tamar deserve more. As I say in the notation, if the pulpmill goes ahead, how much more traffic is it going to put on that section of that road? We have heard today that the culverts in the Supply River were done in about 1940. Are we going to submit the travelling public to another 60 years of not second-class, not third-class, but probably thirtieth-class road?

One of the greatest revenues that the Government has - first federally and then they pass the money back - is the great old sacred milking cow of excise on fuel. I know it all doesn't come back to the roads, as it was originally designed to. It was on record that Mr Howard has said, 'They're not going to get all that for roads', and maybe we don't, but we can be wise in our spending of it. Admittedly it will cost more to do but we are not going to commit for another 60 years - and that is what it will be because that is the way they will take it - of going around that long, sweeping bend. I ask that it be noted that the realignment is necessary.

CHAIR - Just so other people are aware as well, Mr Ockerby, I think Mr Donnelly has mentioned to you in your conversations with him that the jurisdiction of this committee is to either approve or reject any proposal before it. You are aware of that; others might need to hear that as well. If the committee is of a mind to recommend approval of the project, that will be one course of action. We can't recommend amendments to the proposal.

Mr OCKERBY - No, but you can say that it shouldn't go ahead, that we believe that alternative factors can take place.

Mrs NAPIER - When we were down there for the site inspection we raised the question of what a realignment would cost. You can see where you could basically cut off quite a bit. I think the answer that came back to us at the time was that it would significantly increase the cost over the \$3 million that was already identified for it. I am conscious of the desire of the Friends of the West Tamar and the council to get the project to proceed quickly, given the fairly dangerous setting it is in.

Mr OCKERBY - How long has that danger been going on?

Mrs NAPIER - It has been there for a long time.

Mr OCKERBY - What is another 12 months when the future of it can be so much more advanced? I apologise that I was not aware that this had gone on for so long. I have only just caught up with it in the public notices in the *Examiner*. I am sorry for that, and I was not aware of the extent that it was. I weighed up in my mind whether I should or should not stay away from it. I do feel that what I am committing myself to is more necessary than delaying because of the future that it would give the advancement of the people down in that area. Now I know that some of the people from the Beaconsfield/Beauty Point area have been talking about realignment, and they have gone away at various times feeling that they have butted their heads against a brick wall. I do not want to be that type of person, and I do not want to be inflexible. I want to have a look at it and am quite happy to discuss things, but I still believe in my mind that it is the way to go.

You have that stretch down to the bridges and then you have the long right-hand section. Flow of traffic is most necessary, and you are not going to get any better flow of the traffic. It is going to make passing a little safer, but it is not going to allow better overtaking, and that is what we should be looking at. We are dealing with a road that was aligned in the days of the horse and buggy when we should be looking at the days of trucks, B-doubles, 500 or 600 horsepower - how many tonnes? That is what I am about.

Mrs NAPIER - You would be aware, Mr Ockerby, that this is a State road, that it is not actually contributed to by the Federal Government?

Mr OCKERBY - Absolutely, yes.

Mrs NAPIER - I thank you for raising your concerns. Better late than never. Could we ask that Mr Cumming or the representative of the department give us a rough indication of what it would cost for a realignment, and did they look at it? Who would be in the best position to answer that?

Mr CUMMING - I can give a very approximate answer.

Mrs NAPIER - Thank you, Mr Cumming.

Mr CUMMING - Mr Chairman, I am not familiar with the proposal that has been presented to you but I have been involved in looking at 11 options for the kilometre or so that we looked at. These figures would need to be verified perhaps by some research. Our budget is \$3 million for what we are proposing and we have looked at 11 options to come down to that budget. To build a by-pass or two roads would at least double the

cost to \$6 million, and to add passing lanes - and I understand that the standard now is to have passing lanes on both sides on standard passing lane sections - would add another \$3 million, so you would be going from \$3 million to \$6 million to \$9 million. I cannot guarantee those figures. I would need to do some checking, but based on work that we have done in the past on dollars per kilometre to construct a lane, two lanes, three lanes or four lanes, they are the sorts of figures that would eventuate. They do not include the additional costs of land acquisition. I believe there would be probably significant costs of acquisition through that pasture land.

Mrs NAPIER - I felt it was really important to have the costings down for the record.

Mr OCKERBY - Can I just answer that? The West Tamar Highway from Exeter on has had virtually nothing spent on it for years, for decades. It is a priority thing, especially now that we have the woodchip industry as it is, and feeding through the Frankford area onto that section of road. This is really something that should have been done years ago. We are getting into the Supply River bridges as they are, and they need to be done, but I believe that the alternative of realignment to get it straight and to make it a lot easier for the general public in their travelling for overtaking or passing, whichever way they are going, is a necessity and not just an option.

CHAIR - Thanks, we do appreciate that. Your evidence to the committee gives us an opportunity to consider broader issues related to this area and I guess people will have gathered that we are seeking further information from the department anyway. I could pre-empt the committee's deliberations today by saying that we will not be making a decision on the project today because we are awaiting further information.

Mr OCKERBY - I thank you, Mr Chairman, and I thank the committee for your sincerity in putting up with the old fella!

CHRISTINE MILLER, RESIDENT WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Thanks for your written submission -

Ms MILLER - Rushed.

CHAIR - it may have been rushed but it was extensive nonetheless. We have had the opportunity of going through that submission and familiarising ourselves with the detail of it, so if you would like to share your verbal evidence with the committee and then, as you have seen the process unfold, we will no doubt have some questions for you.

Ms MILLER - Before I start, being a member of the family on which this is going to have a profound effect, one of the family's questions at the moment is why are we going west instead of east when it is already fenced off on the east and there is room there? That comment was made last night, and that is from the wider family. We are having some problems, to say the least, with the relocation of the power poles.

I welcome the opportunity to make a submission to the Parliamentary Committee on Public Works. I do so as a ratepayer and a holder of land adjoining the Supply River in the West Tamar region in the area known as Loira, which you would have visited today. As I said earlier, my family own the property going towards Beaconsfield on the left-hand side and so it will have a significant social, economic and environmental impact on that particular property and the landscape surrounding in this heritage area.

I have listed, not exhaustively, some of the issues that I thought needed to be given robust consideration by the committee before the approval of any public works funding. It appeared that, in talking to Heritage Tasmania and historians - and I have spoken to people within the Historical Society, particularly Jean Pritchett - there is no heritage plan. Historical rural landscape exists there and there seems to be no appreciation of the significance of the heritage that is there as such.

I believe the Supply River mill is listed on the National Heritage List and there is no reference to that that I have seen in the reports. They just say that there is no heritage there in this preliminary environmental assessment. I have had discussions with them in the last 24 hours and they are realising that there is heritage. Can I table that report? There is a considerable heritage report and a community partnership between Parks and Wildlife and the council of that area that the committee might like to consider. I am not sure of the boundaries of that or what we are really talking about because there is a riparian water right. Some of it is publicly owned and some privately owned, so there is a real mix-match there.

CHAIR - Do you want to leave that with us?

Ms MILLER - There is a heap of documents which will help the level of understanding of the committee of what heritage actually is there when we are told that there is not any. This location holds significant early European Tasmanian history resources from a State perspective. It says there that you do a heritage resource assessment and then a heritage

plan - that is protocol. So I would expect, given the significance of this area, that that should be done before we consider putting bulldozers and whatever works there.

Hydro have completed an Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment and they evidently did not find anything but when you read the other report on the Supply River mill, that seems to contradict it. It was a centre for our early Aboriginals and whatever. I think it needs a historian to tease those issues out; it is not an economist's area. There are social and economic benefits for all Tasmanians to be gained by highlighting and enhancing such features and I honestly do not believe that this has been considered.

I have said the committee is not only a guardian of public works funding but it also has significant obligations to all Tasmanians that a holistic, exhaustive and integrated approach is adopted by policy makers to show that this is a significant historical area with profound early history. There has been funding from both ends of this area and most of the West Tamar families that are still down there and in Launceston - the early pioneer families - come directly from that area. If we look at any family trees we see that they have strong links to the structures and the Supply River, so to speak. I can supply evidence to justify that claim if need be.

At this stage I do not believe the proponents of the upgrade have met Tasmanian policy needs and I think one of the policy directives is to sustain the potential of natural and physical resources to meet foreseeable needs of future generations. That has just definitely been ignored or certainly not sufficiently addressed at this point.

In my submission I said that there had been funding to the Supply River church through the bicentennial grant, and that was the birth of Methodism in the west Tamar and the resting place of many pioneering families. It seems to be that we have some association there with John West, who you may know of. It has not been confirmed but I believe Charles Page, who is my great-great-grandfather, leased the property of John West. Reverend John West, who founded the City Mission, was the instigator of the formation of the *Examiner* and was a friend of the owner of the *Sydney Morning Herald*. There is a string of achievements. I think he wrote a book about the early history of Tasmania and Patricia Ratcliff has written a book about his life and achievements. It is something that Tasmanians celebrate and to think that is where he owned a parcel of land, possibly, and we have relations of John Glover there, too. I do not think we have really identified what resource we have there, although when I say that, the Historical Society has started both ends of it but we need to get it together and we need State resources in there. I can understand the community wanting a road but we have to be sensitive to what tourism resource we might have there.

There are other features that I am aware of. People talk of a walking track to Exeter - because Exeter was an early town - from the flour mill and the wheat fields on the early farms. Perhaps those tracks could be determined and used for cyclists or for walking. There is a historical home that was built in 1830 - and I was lucky to be the owner of it for about 20 years. There is a foundation stone nearby that I believe was the little Loira school, which was, I believe, erected on the banks of the Supply River. Footings may be there but we need to have a look at that. Are they there or aren't they? I am not sure what year that was built in, but I believe it is on the stone.

I refer in my submission to managing historic rural landscapes. It is probably a fairly new area for Tasmania as such but there has been some work done on it. I refer to this particular manuscript by Anne McConnell and Natalie Servant; they refer to the challenges and opportunities that you might embrace to highlight the pluses of cultural heritage and tourism.

CHAIR - For the purposes of Hansard, Christine, you might mention the title of the manuscript you are talking about.

Ms MILLER - *The History and Heritage of the Tasmanian Apple Industry: A Profile*, by Anne McConnell and Natalie Servant; report of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston, December 1999.

That gives you some sort of insight into the heritage as such. There is an article on John West, just exemplifying some of his achievements: general cemetery, Cornwall Insurance Company, mechanics institute, the Hobart High School, and it goes on.

Now coming to the environmental assessment and its deficiencies, clarity, and it does not appear to be robust. I am not an environmentalist, but I have some appreciation of the acts and what we need to work with. There seems to be a preliminary assessment done, and that raises a number of issues. One is that I do not think we have addressed the issues of avoidance and the mitigation of adverse effects of the activities that this development would cause. There is no environmental management plan, and when I was talking to Heritage Tasmania they said in a situation like this you would need nearly every tree marked on a plan because of the sensitivity of it. If you can work within those bounds, that is fine, but I think we have to be aware of it, and the community has to embrace it and be taken to a higher level of knowledge if this development goes ahead in the future.

The other impact that is an uncertain one is the volume of water. That bridge has been there obviously for a number of years, and you would have to bring in a hydrologist, I believe, because we have this historical heritage-listed structure down below, and the archaeologists I think have it listed as future unveiling. We have rocks in the stream with initials on them identifying that it was discovered by Collins and his mineralogist in 1800 or before 1800, so what are floods going to do, going down, with climate change affecting those heritage and cultural resources further down? Is there going to be an impact?

Mrs NAPIER - They're the ones down at the mill?

Ms MILLER - Yes. So have we addressed those sorts of issues? I don't think so. In that assessment process you have a resource there in the historical society. They would be only too willing to help identify what is there and assist the community to come to a higher level and highlight its tourist potential, and I do not think that has been done. I do not think we have seen any sort of consultation at the level the Tasmanian community would expect.

Obviously we have some remnant stands of vegetation communities there. Have these been considered, the mitigation impact on these stands within the precinct that we are looking at? Further, supposedly these stands or the corridor that we have here provide a

path for the swift parrot, which is a vulnerable species, and I am not sure that it is not the emblem of the Bridgenorth Football Club, so it isn't the emblem of the original football club so is that not a tourist drawcard or a potential to highlight to the community?

Regarding the historical potential and the significance of this particular area, if people are unsure they have only got to go to any history book on northern Tasmania and there it is, so to say it has no history or heritage value, dearie me! If you stand back, with the road that is actually there, we have not got a heritage avenue. Given the species and what we have there - obviously years ago that was the original road - as everybody says, nothing has been done for the last 50 years or whatever so what have we got there?

To resolve the situation, while robust interrogation and due diligence goes on, I suggest that we put in a red sun sort of signage - and I believe the West Tamar Council have funds available, from talking to the tourist officer - identifying or saying that we have a high heritage value corridor here, reduce your speed and please enjoy. It is a completely different perspective to the 3-lane alternative view and realignment. I am not against realignment. If it was out of that area, that might be a solution, given the values that we have there, but it is obviously a very, very expensive solution.

CHAIR - Does that finish your submission, Christine?

Mr MILLER - I think that is me.

CHAIR - Thank you for that.

Mr HALL - Christine, I have read your submission and taken note of what you have said and all the values you espouse. Given that there is that existing road corridor and it has been there for I do not know how many years and it has probably been the access to the northern end of the West Tamar for 100 years or so and given what is proposed is basically some reconstruction along that alignment, could I suggest to you that it is going to have a pretty minimal impact upon any of those values that you are talking about there?

Mr MILLER - I would like to think that but I have had an experience where a development was carried out in Launceston and I was given that reassurance. It didn't happen and it ended up in the courts so you do not seem to be able to have enough mitigation and plans and everything in place because people who come in to do the works and the contractors do not have the appreciation and the level of understanding of the area as probably the people here today so anything can happen. Provided the plans and the measures and everything are put in place, yes, okay, but they have to realise they are dealing with a very sensitive area and the communities are the stakeholders in this heritage area.

Mr HALL - Within the proposed corridor, is there anything that is actually heritage listed? You mentioned something before but I didn't quite catch what that was or is that within the precincts?

Ms MILLER - Sorry, could you repeat that?

Mr HALL - Where you have the existing bridges and everything else, is there anything that is heritage listed at the moment?

Ms MILLER - Again, I am not totally sure that we have done a heritage assessment because I am not a full bottle on what is there, what resource we are playing around with because I believe we have the footings of the little Loira school on the bank there and I thought that the historical society would be only too happy to identify what is there but I do not think we have used that community resource and the senior members that we have there in a proposal like this.

Mr HALL - You also talked about the historic home built in about 1830, I think, it was within half a kilometre of the road; is that still there? Is the Uniting Church still there?

Ms MILLER - Yes, that is well maintained.

Mr HALL - How far away is that? Is that to the north?

Ms MILLER - Yes, to the north. When you start talking about the removal of trees and things like that then you are affecting the rural landscape that is there.

Mr HALL - I think I did put the question when evidence was given earlier. In regard to the trees that have been assessed, from my recollection some weren't of significant value. That is what we were told in evidence before.

Ms MILLER - Again, I have been told before previously that a significant tree, heritage trees, can be listed as weeds. It is a heritage area so you have to have somebody with heritage skills.

Mr HALL - I agree with you that not all hawthorn trees are rural.

Ms MILLER - No. We saved hawthorn trees out at Hagley, didn't we, because we realised that they were of heritage value.

Mrs NAPIER - The supplier of the mill is quite some distance from where the road alignment is. Whereabouts is the church that we are talking about? That is near the house, is it? Is this the Winkleigh church we are talking about?

Ms MILLER - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - Okay.

Ms MILLER - I believe it is a title that John West owns. The school is just on the verge of it.

Mrs NAPIER - In looking at that area, which we all agree is fairly flood prone and has been once every five years or thereabouts, would it be likely that any buildings or other would actually be placed in that flood zone area, which is the area that is going to be predominantly impacted by the improvement of the road? If it is anticipated that there could be some building structures or other evidence of prior habitation, I question whether it is likely to be on that flat because anyone who was there would have at least experienced flood pretty regularly.

Ms MILLER - You would have to ask why the barrier was actually put there in the first place; what actually was it? That is what went through my mind. Was it to stop the water going down to the mill? What was going on at the mill? I don't know; you are going back 200 years. What did that road or that bridge look like then? Do we really know the purpose of it?

Mrs NAPIER - I reckon they built up the embankment so they could get the carts through.

Ms MILLER - You may be right.

Mrs NAPIER - You have raised the issue of cultural tourism and heritage and that is a fair question. In terms of the trees there, are you aware that they are E.ovata. I know the Hydro report refers to E.ovata trees but how close are they to the actual bridge?

Ms MILLER - Are they going to be removed is probably the question.

Mrs NAPIER - We can follow up that question with the department.

CHAIR - We can do except, as Mr Hall said earlier, we have had evidence from the department and their studies have indicated that no trees of significance are going to be affected.

Ms MILLER - Is the area under a scenic protection zone?

Mrs NAPIER - I wouldn't think so.

Ms MILLER - No, under nothing.

Mrs NAPIER - I am trying to make the link between the Supply River and mill area, which I am familiar with, the dates and so on. Is there any other evidence that there was a track coming back towards the bridges or is it likely, as you said, the tracks that existed would have kept closer to the coastline through to Exeter?

Ms MILLER - Again, I am not an historian so it is a little bit like the Gallipoli story, only this is earlier. This is not World War I; this is 200 years ago. You put the bulldozers through and then you say, 'What did we disturb?' I am saying do a historical assessment, an historical plan and put some resources into that area before we progress down this track of no return. I am not against development or whatever but I believe in doing your homework before you progress. I do not think we have done it and we have not brought the community with us on tourist potential and heritage.

Mrs NAPIER - Did you raise these issues through the consultation period?

Mr MILLER - I was only aware when my 80-year-old parents had angst about some telegraph poles being moved onto their property.

Mrs NAPIER - That is when you became aware of it?

Ms MILLER - Yes, then I went into council and Mr Ray Wright said he thought it was fairly well progressed and we were all totally confused about where we were at. It all seemed to be suddenly rushed but we have been talking about this for the last 10 to 20 years.

Mrs NAPIER - In relation to the particulars you raise of the telegraph pole relocation, we actually had a look at that on a site inspection. It is my understanding that it has been proposed that there be some guards around the telegraph poles to make sure the cattle cannot lick them, et cetera. Is that satisfactory to your family?

Ms MILLER - Initial discussions were that when flooding occurs - that is most likely because we have our adverse weather conditions - this is when they are probably going to have to access the poles. How are they going to get onto flood plains? Are we going to have four-wheel drive vehicles and whatever going onto the flood plain?

Mrs NAPIER - My question is about the timing of when those poles are likely to be relocated.

Ms MILLER - We do not see why they need to be relocated and why we have to take the impost given that they accommodate the poles, I notice, on the Gorge bridge.

Mrs NAPIER - They generally like to keep poles away from cars in modern day road design. Are you aware that the design of this new section of road is going to cater for a one-in-100 year flood by the use of a greater number of culverts for allowing the water to move through rather than banking up and flooding the road?

Ms MILLER - That concerns me. That is why I raised the issue. We are talking about hydrology and water issues there. I am not a hydrologist but I immediately hear alarm bells going off because they must have impacts on these archaeologically important structures further down if we are going to have a one-in-100 year flood problem, or whatever you referred to it as, because to me it is more frequent than that.

Mrs NAPIER - My understanding is that it is currently designed for a one-in-five but in effect it is closed one in every five years due to flood - but the plan is that it will only likely close once in a 100 years with the new design.

Ms MILLER - You referred to the telegraph poles, but there seems to be a policy that you are not allowed to plant under telegraph poles, so we won't be able to reinstate the visual amenity that we are currently enjoying. We will be looking at a road. At the moment we are enjoying a corridor of heritage vegetation, we believe.

Mrs NAPIER - Is that section of land cropped at all?

Ms MILLER - Yes, for hay.

Mrs NAPIER - It is not used for cash crops; it will continue to be used for grass.

Ms MILLER - You still cut it for hay and have machinery there.

Mrs NAPIER - I'm not quite sure how that impacts on what you can and can't grow because it seems to me that the grass will still grow under the telegraph poles.

Ms MILLER - You can't manoeuvre large machinery around a telegraph pole.

CHAIR - Is there anything you wish to add before we conclude, Christine?

Ms MILLER - Are you in a situation to approve the plan with conditions? Is that part of the outcome, or it is just a yes or a no.

Mrs NAPIER - It is yes or no. We can note concerns in reports and register them but in the end we either approve the project or not approve it because of concerns raised.

CHAIR - Thanks, Christine.

Mrs NAPIER - Mr Cumming, in relation to the E.ovata issue and the trees, are the E.ovata trees really close to the highway? How many E.ovata trees will be removed?

Mr CUMMING - For the purposes of the road construction there is one significant tree near the main Supply River, which is indicated on our plans to be removed. The other trees need to be removed as a consequence of the relocation of the Aurora overhead line. To date, Aurora has been negotiating with the owners in respect to that activity, so I cannot comment on how many trees there are to be removed in respect of the Aurora line.

Mrs NAPIER - Is it likely to significantly impact on the volume of trees in the E.ovata zone?

Mr CUMMING - I wouldn't have thought there would be more than two or three trees to be removed, but that is purely an impression from my previous knowledge of the site. I have not looked at the site with Aurora or at the actual location of their new line.

Mrs NAPIER - Thank you. The issue was raised in terms of the volume of water and presumably the flow of water. That would take into account the speed or flow of the water and the height of the water by the time the water flow arrives in the known heritage areas of the Supply River mill and that date that is etched on the northern side of the mill area. What is your assessment of both height and speed of water?

Mr CUMMING - I would say that categorically there will be zero impact on the Supply River mill by any works that take place in the proposed project. It is impossible for there to be any hydraulic impact by the proposed works.

Mrs NAPIER - Because of the distance, or -

Mr CUMMING - Because what happens downstream happens downstream, and the construction of the culverts is simply the construction of the culverts. The water will flow through, or the water won't flow through, but what happens downstream is a totally separated activity.

Mrs NAPIER - So are we saying that as a function of the bridge construction, it is not going to speed up the flow of water? It just reduces the time over which the water might flow, because it does not bank up for as long.

Mr CUMMING - The only impact the new work on the culverts could have, or in fact the original work on putting culverts in 40 years ago, would be to slow down the transfer of flood waters from upstream to downstream. So any activities in upgrading culverts or bridges at the proposed works will have zero effect on flood levels downstream.

Mrs NAPIER - And in relation to the embankment that leads to the current bridge, which we have agreed has been there for some time, what do we know about whether that was always built up as a raised area for passage? Do you have any documents about when that section was raised, how far back?

Mr CUMMING - I do not have any knowledge, but it would be my understanding that possibly what happened when the existing carriageway was constructed was that there were additional earthworks provided for future widening on the eastern side. As it has now eventuated, since we looked at various options for the upgrading, the option to widen on the eastern side has proved not to be the optimum solution.

Mrs NAPIER - And that is why you're coming back to the west?

Mr CUMMING - We will be coming to the centre so we will be widening equally on both sides.

Mr POORTENAAR - Those earthworks on the east will just mean that we will not have to have as much fill on the east as we otherwise would have, so that still will be of value.

Mr CUMMING - It is a benefit.

Mrs NAPIER - So you are actually impacting on both east and west of the road?

Mr POORTENAAR - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - My last one question is in relation to the hydro poles. Have concerns been expressed about the impacting on agricultural activity relative to the poles? What has been negotiated in relation to this? Is there compensation being considered?

Mr CUMMING - Aurora did bring up the owners' concerns requiring protection to the poles, and the response is that I understand Aurora can provide protection devices in the way of fences, a little local triangular fence around the poles, and the department are quite prepared to pay the extra cost for that to be incorporated in the relocation of the new Aurora poles.

Mrs NAPIER - In terms of the impact upon moving a harvester, a bale-maker or whatever you call them - I used to have the whole square long bales; I guess it is round bales now - what assessment has been made of the impact of moving those telegraph poles further into the property relative to farming practices?

Mr CUMMING - That would be handled by the department's Acquisition Officer, and that has been referred to him for his action.

Mrs NAPIER - Okay, so compensation could be anticipated?

Mr CUMMING - Definitely a part of the compensation.

Mrs NAPIER - Okay. The assessment you are doing of the spring/summer flowering period, which we talked about down at the inspection, what do you do if you find species that are in fact listed as 'threatened species'?

Mr CUMMING - Normally we would seek the advice of the Threatened Species Unit and people like that in the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment. In this case that follow-up springtime study has now been completed and there were no threatened or endangered species discovered.

Mrs NAPIER - So that has already been done?

Mr CUMMING - That has been completed.

Mrs NAPIER - Thank you. I think it is very important to follow up some of those concerns.

CHAIR - Thank you, gentlemen.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.