



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

Tasman Highway-Hobart Airport to Midway Point Causeway

*Presented to Her Excellency the Governor pursuant to the provisions of the
Public Works Committee Act 1914.*

Legislative Council

Mr Valentine (Chair)
Ms Rattray

House of Assembly

Ms Butler
Mr Ellis
Mr Tucker

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1 INTRODUCTION

To Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, Governor in and over the State of Tasmania and its Dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY

The Committee has investigated the following proposal:-

Tasman Highway-Hobart Airport to Midway Point Causeway

and now has the honour to present the Report to Your Excellency in accordance with the Public Works Committee Act 1914 (the Act).

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This reference recommended the Committee approve works to upgrade the Tasman Highway between the Hobart International Airport and the Midway Point Causeway from a single carriageway to dual carriage way.
- 2.2 Sorell is one of the fastest growing areas in Tasmania. The main transport corridor between Hobart and Sorell is the Tasman Highway which also serves the Hobart International Airport. The highway corridor provides access for commuters, freight and tourists. The population in the region is typically interspersed, low density and is highly reliant on car travel. Limited job opportunities in the region result in almost 64% of workers commuting to workplaces outside of their local area.
- 2.3 Between Hobart and the Airport, the Tasman Highway is a dual carriageway, however from the Airport to Sorell the highway is only a single carriageway and carries in excess of 20,000 vehicles per day. These traffic volumes result in significant traffic delays for road users particularly during peak periods when the theoretical lane capacity of the highway is exceeded. This traffic volume is also well above the traffic volumes at which 2 lane roads are normally considered for upgrading.
- 2.4 Recognising the deficiencies in the 9 kilometre section of highway between the Airport and Sorell, including amenity and congestion issues within the township of Sorell, the State Government has committed to the South East Traffic Solution (SETS). This is a multi-level short and medium term vision that will reduce congestion and improve level of service and travel time reliability between Sorell and the four-lane section of the Tasman Highway at Hobart Airport.
- 2.5 One of the key projects under the SETS is the Tasman Highway-Hobart Airport to Midway Point Causeway upgrade. This single carriageway section of the Tasman Highway has a poor crash history and safe access to and from the highway is becoming increasingly difficult due to the limited gaps in highway traffic.
- 2.6 Five options were investigated and the selected design was chosen following community consultation and consultation with directly impacted stakeholders.

- 2.7 The selected design follows the alignment of the existing highway with widening on the northern side of the highway over the first 1.2 kilometres to avoid impacting on the airport runway. Past the runway zone, the highway is widened on each side to minimise impacts on both the Tasmania Golf Club and the Milford property, which contains threatened orchid species. The existing highway pavement will largely be retained; from the airport to Pittwater Road it will become the westbound carriageway and from Pittwater Road to the Midway Point causeway it will become the eastbound carriageway. A separated cycleway will also be included within the road reserve. Roadside hazards and opposing traffic streams will be protected by wire rope safety barriers.
- 2.8 The proposed works will provide 2.6 kilometres of dual carriageway with a signalised intersection at Pittwater Road. The safe system approach employed by the Department has resulted in the consolidation of multiple access points into a single intersection controlled by the traffic signals at the Pittwater Road junction. The signalised intersection will provide access to Pittwater Road, and both the Tasmania Golf Club and the adjoining Barilla Bay Oysters commercial property via new service roads. The traffic lights will operate on demand, instead of a timed cycle, giving priority to Tasman Highway traffic. Additional vehicle actuated signs will be installed on the highway that will warn approaching vehicles of an impending red light.

3 PROJECT COSTS

- 3.1 Pursuant to the Message from Her Excellency the Governor-in-Council, the estimated cost of the work is \$28.8 million.

The following table details the current p50 and p90 cost estimates for the project:

	P50 (\$M)	P90 (\$M)
Base Cost Estimate	24.3	24.3
Contingency	2.7	4.1
Total Project Cost Estimate	27.0	28.4
Escalation	0.3	0.3
Total Outturn Cost Estimate	27.3	28.7

4 EVIDENCE

4.1 The Committee commenced its inquiry on Wednesday, 20 October last with an inspection of the site of the proposed works. The Committee then returned to Parliament House, whereupon the following witnesses appeared, made the Statutory Declaration and were examined by the Committee in public:-

- Sven Meyer, Project Management Team Leader, Department of State Growth;
- Howard Mitchell, Network Planner, Department of State Growth;
- Matt Cocker, Chief Operating Officer, Hobart International Airport;
- Justin Goc, General Manager, Barilla Bay Seafoods;
- Geoff Curry (community member); and
- Robyn Lewis (community member and owner Milford property).

The following Committee Members were present:

- Rob Valentine (Chair);
- Jen Butler;
- Felix Ellis; and
- John Tucker.

Overview

4.2 Mr Meyer provided an overview of the proposed works:

Mr MEYER - ... Today we are seeking approval for the Tasman Highway Hobart Airport to Midway Point Causeway project. The project involves upgrading of 2.7 km of the Tasman Highway between the new Hobart Airport interchange and the Midway Point Causeway to four lanes; consolidation of multiple access points into a single intersection controlled by traffic signals; an extension of a separated shared path along the northern side of the highway.

This project is one of six separate projects that form part of the South East Traffic Solution. The program will upgrade a 9 km section of Tasman Highway between the Hobart Airport and Sorell to four lanes, improve intersections and provide a continuous 2.5 metre-wide separated shared pathway linking Clarence to the Sorell municipality. The program of works will reduce the congestion and improve the level of service and travel time reliability between Sorell and the Hobart Airport.

The Tasman Highway between Hobart Airport and Sorell is limited in its current capacity, with an average traffic growth rate of 3 per cent. The highway between Hobart Airport and Midway Point is currently at capacity in both the morning and afternoon peak periods, and carries well over 20 000 vehicles per day. The traffic volume is well above the traffic volumes at which two lanes are normally developed.

The recorded crash history for the section of Tasman Highway for the last 10 years is as follows: there are 53 crashes reported throughout the last 10 years and the majority of these crashes recorded are same-lane rear-end crashes, which is reflective of a highway that is at capacity in carrying large volumes of traffic. The highway upgrades include crash reduction factors such as dual carriageway with barriers on either side and through the median strip; removal of right turns off and on the highway; wide shoulders; and roadside safety barriers. These safety designs are predicted to result in a 33 per cent reduction in crashes.

The project design follows extensive option analysis, community consultation and a thorough engagement with directly impacted landholders. The selected design follows the alignment of the existing highway, with widening on the northern side of the highway for the first 1.2 km to avoid the airport runway. Past the airport, the highway is widened on both sides to minimise impacts on both the Tasmania Golf Club and the Milford property.

When the project is completed, it will achieve the following benefits: travel time savings of over three minutes per trip; the whole South East Traffic Solution will achieve a nine-minute travel time saving; the journey will be more reliable and predictable in terms of the travel time, allowing people to plan their journey; the three existing junctions that are currently heavily congested and almost impossible to utilise during peak periods will be upgraded to a centralised controlled intersection; it will lower accident rates; it will increase cycling and connectivity between the Sorell region and greater Hobart.

Safety improvements will be delivered by new flexible safety barriers, improved traffic management at the intersections, separated cycle/walking paths, enhanced street lighting, vehicle operating cost savings and removal of current roadside hazards.

In terms of costs, the total project is forecast to cost \$27.3 million, which is the P50 cost for the highway upgrade. These costs are based on estimates for current similar projects. A good example would be the Hobart Airport-Midway Point, which we used for our costing basis. The project has a benefit cost ratio of 9, which is extremely high for any road projects and extremely high for most infrastructure projects, which is indicative of the current congestion of those experienced along the corridor. Once delivered, road users will see a significant improvement in travel time reliability and improved road safety.

Subject to approvals, construction is planned to commence in May 2022 and be completed by the end of 2023.

Overall, we submit that this project is an important component of the South East Traffic Solution, which will significantly improve the lives of thousands of residents in Midway Point, Sorell and the southern beaches areas by reducing congestion, improving peak travel time, providing a shared pathway linking Clarence and Sorell communities, and improving road safety. We have worked with the community and impacted stakeholders, and will continue to do so to reduce the impacts of the project, both during and before construction. The project has a significant benefit-cost ratio so, in conclusion, this project is a good use of taxpayers' money.

Need for the Works

4.3 The Committee questioned the Department's witnesses on the need for the works. The Committee was keen to understand if the need was based on the limitations of the single carriageway or bottlenecks at either end of the proposed works:

CHAIR -Moving on to the project scope, justification and need. Under 2.1, Project justification and need, it says -

The highway between the Airport and Western Causeway is at capacity in both morning and afternoon peaks and currently carries over 20,000 vehicles per day. This traffic volume is well above the traffic volumes at which 2 lane roads are normally considered for upgrading.

And it goes on. Is it the fact that the two-lane highway is at capacity, or is it the pinch points that are at capacity? Midway Point, for instance, being a pinch point; perhaps the airport roundabout is considered a pinch point? Do you have a comment on that? I know there are two-lane highways that carry 20 000 vehicles a day quite easily, but they may not have the pinch points that this highway has at either end.

Mr MEYER - Yes, the pinch points exaggerate the impact, but it is the fact that you only have one lane in each direction, with 20 000 vehicles travelling through it, that causes the delays. Where you have a pinch point, or the causeway where you have narrow shoulders, then that causes people to slow down during peak periods. It just decreases the speed, essentially.

CHAIR - Let's imagine the Midway Point pinch point didn't exist, and it's an 80 kilometre per hour stretch of road. Is it the fact that it's only two lanes that is the issue, or is it really going to be how the traffic is actually negotiating those areas? That's basically what I'm asking.

Mr MEYER - Yes. Once the Midway Point works are finished towards the middle of next year, traffic will flow freely through Midway Point - but once it hits the causeways, which are two lanes, it will slow down again, until it opens up again from Hobart Airport to four lanes.

CHAIR - A question with respect to the two-lane highway arrangement. You have other examples of where vehicles on a two-lane highway are greater than 20 000 a day?

Mr MEYER - I'm not positive, but this is one of the busier sections of a highway in Tasmania where there are two lanes. I would probably say it's the busiest... ..

Mr MITCHELL - There'd be very few two-lane roads with traffic volumes that high. Usually about 17 000 vehicles a day is a rule of thumb of when we consider duplication is necessary. It comes down to the hourly figures and just how concentrated the traffic is in the peak hours. I think that would certainly be the case on this stretch of highway, that it's not 20 000 vehicles spread evenly over the day.

It will be very much more crowded in that seven to 8 a.m. period in the morning and then maybe the four to 5 p.m. hour in the afternoon. It comes back to Austroads standards for hourly capacity of each lane and whether they're exceeded.

4.4 The Committee sought to understand if increased use of public transport would be a viable alternative to deal with congestion:

Ms BUTLER - Has the public transport option been identified and properly explored as an investment in this area?

Mr MEYER - I can only comment on what I know in terms of the project. My understanding was that when the funding was announced for this project, funding was also announced for increased bus services from the Sorell area, which I think occurred around 2019. There were quite a few more services provided.

When you look at the traffic volume of 20 000 vehicles a day, and the number of people who hop on the buses, even if you doubled or quadrupled that, it's going to have an insignificant impact on traffic volume. While we want to increase public transport and increase walking and cycling, which is what we are doing with the separated cycleway, you're still going to require four lanes in the future. Otherwise, there will always be congestion on that section of highway.

CHAIR - Has it ever been considered that, given that level of usage of that road, that indeed it might encourage people to use public transport if it's backing up all the time, rather than spending a lot of money on duplicating the road?

Mr MEYER - We do look at all those factors. One of the issues we currently have is if you catch the bus now you're stuck in traffic the same as the vehicle, which is one of the ideas that transit lanes are necessary; otherwise you're essentially taking just as long still sitting in the bus.

Cost-Benefit Analysis

4.5 The Committee noted that the overall SETS program had a favourable cost-benefit ratio, with significant benefits resulting from reduced congestion, travel time savings, crash reduction and reduced vehicle maintenance. The Committees sought further information on the significance of the cost-benefit ratio for this project:

Mr TUCKER - The benefit-cost ratio is over nine; you might want to explain it a little bit so people can get an idea of how high that is.

Mr MEYER - Our Commonwealth funding goes through a business case submission. As part of that, you look at the benefit-cost ratio. The cost, essentially, is the cost of the project; between \$27- to \$29 million. The benefits are the other side - the benefits to the community from the project.

The major benefit for this is the reduction in travel time . There are also benefits in terms of maintenance of vehicles and crashes. Every crash has a cost, especially if there's an impact to people. In terms of travel time savings for the whole South-East Solution Project, you have a nine-minute potential travel-time saving every single day. Essentially, they work it out on how much a person earns and how much that would cost for nine minutes per day multiplied by 20 000 vehicles. The benefits, in this case, far outweigh the cost of constructing the project.

... .. Generally, for a lot of our road projects, we'd be happy if we achieved benefit-cost ratio of one to two. Nine is extremely unusual, and highlights the high congestion cost we currently have in this section of road.

Mr ELLIS - I was going to ask about time savings. You said an average of three minutes on this and nine minutes over the corridor. What are we talking about in peak hour? Do we have a rough sense of what we think we're going to save people coming through then?

Mr MEYER - I don't have those numbers, no, but it would be significant.

Mr ELLIS - This road typically skews at a much higher volume in a certain period of time.

Mr MEYER - Yes. The morning peak coming in, is bumper-to-bumper traffic. People are doing less than 20 kilometres per hour, from Midway Point through to Hobart Airport before you get to the four lanes. It's the same in the afternoon peak coming back. Once we build the four lanes all the way through it will be as per the current traffic arrangements, they'll be free-flowing all the way through.

- 4.6 Ms Lewis was of the view that the cost-benefit of the project should be considered individually, rather than as part of the whole SETS program, given the Committee was only considering this element of the SETS:

Ms LEWIS - One thing I was interested in, is that there is a lot of talk about the cost benefit analysis applying to the whole of SETS, which is the South-East Traffic Solution. You are not actually assessing the whole of SETS; you are assessing this project. You need to be looking at the cost benefit analysis of this project, not the whole thing, and the ratio is totally different.

- 4.7 The Committee, while recognising that it was only considering the reference before it, also recognised the integrated nature of the SETS program meant it was not feasible or practical in this instance to consider the cost-benefit analysis of an individual element in isolation:

Mr ELLIS - On the corridor, we heard some testimony from witnesses about the cost-benefit ratio being for the whole corridor rather than this particular section. Would it be right to say that the two would correlate fairly well, given that if we didn't upgrade this part of the whole corridor strategy we would have a two-lane bottleneck right in the middle of it?

Mr MEYER - Yes, that's definitely correct. If the rest of the highway was upgraded and this section wasn't, then this would become the bottleneck. Definitely.

Consultation and Selecting the Preferred Design Option

- 4.8 The Committee noted that a number of options were initially put forward. The Committee sought further detail on how the preferred design was selected, and the reasons why other options were rejected:

CHAIR - Going back to the options evaluation, in the summary at the beginning you talk about five options. Can you outline what those five were? I know you've dealt with three of them

on the next page. For those that are here listening and for members of the public who might be listening, can you tell us what those five options were?

Mr MEYER - There were two initial options. One was continuing the Tasman Highway at 100 kilometres per hour. What that means in terms of Austroads guidelines in designing the road is that the corners and everything else need to be a lot smoother. Essentially, when we looked at what that meant if we extended that 100 kilometres per hour from Hobart Airport to Midway Point, you need to have a lot wider area in terms of building off the road.

That had a significant impact on the Hobart Airport, the Tasmanian Golf Club and the Milford property. As it was currently 80 kilometres per hour, we didn't feel there was enough justification to extend it to 100 kilometres per hour and by keeping it at 80 kilometres per hour and doing it as four lanes, that would solve the problem.

CHAIR - You were saying you needed a wider corridor, and then you mentioned the Milford property. Can you explain what complexities the Milford property involved, that would mitigate against having 100 kilometres per hour?

Mr MEYER - If you're travelling at 100 kilometres per hour you need to have wider lanes and wider shoulders, so the whole cross-section of the road needs to be a lot wider.

To do that, you need to acquire more land, and they have some threatened orchids on the Milford property. I can't remember exactly, but I am pretty sure that the 100 kilometre per hour speed would be getting quite close to where those orchids were. It was considered something that would be too detrimental to the environment, in terms of proceeding with that 100 kilometres per hour.

CHAIR - And the second option?

Mr MEYER - The second option was similar but more acquisition on the Tasmania Golf Club side.

CHAIR - And the third option?

Mr MEYER - Then we went out for a public consultation and we put two options out, at 80 kilometres per hour.

Both of them were a roundabout, instead of traffic signals at the Pittwater intersection. The problem with roundabouts at 80 kilometres per hour is that they take up quite a lot of space. Howard has a drawing here, but essentially the impacts to the property are quite significant.

We had one option, again on the Milford property site, that had significant impacts on the orchids. It also had significant impacts on the Hobart Airport itself.

CHAIR - Was that 80 or 100 kilometres per hour?

Mr MEYER - That was at 80 kilometres per hour.

The other option was on the northern side, which had significant impacts on Barilla Bay and essentially would mean that the Tasmania Golf Club would be unplayable. They would have had to sell the whole golf club facility.

We went out to public consultation on those two options. We received a lot of comments, basically telling us we needed to go back to the drawing board. We did that, and came up with a new option - the one we are sitting with at the moment - which is to limit our impacts on all properties through traffic signals.

We then put that option back out for community consultation to seek feedback on that option.

CHAIR - So is that Option 5, is it?

Mr MEYER - That is Option 5. Correct.

CHAIR - That is the one that is before us today?

Mr MEYER - That's right.

...

CHAIR - The decision on the selected preferred option for the Airport to Midway Point Causeway Project was made after several meetings of the directly impacted individual stakeholders and you named them all there. Barilla Bay Oysters, Milford, Tasmania Golf Club, Hobart International Airport. And, then two further meetings involving all these stakeholders.

..... Can you indicate where you believe consultation is at with respect to each one of those stakeholders?

Mr MEYER - So, we went through the consultation process and we had the relevant options. We then, after talking to the community and stakeholders, came out with the preferred option and we put that on the table and at the time everyone agreed that that was the best of the options provided. It doesn't necessarily mean that they agreed with all the aspects of that option but they agreed that that was the lowest impact option. There are still impacts to the property owners and so they still have concerns about those impacts on their properties.

Signalised Intersection at Tasman Highway/Pittwater Road Junction

4.9 The Committee noted the addition of traffic lights at the junction between the Tasman Highway and Pittwater Road. The Committee understood that this element had been included as a means of resolving the issue of safe access to the highway from side roads and accesses, which had become increasingly difficult over time due to the increase in traffic volumes and congestion. The Committee questioned the Department's witnesses on how the traffic signals would operate and the effect they would have on highway traffic:

CHAIR - Pittwater Road, that junction having been controlled by lights, but it's on demand as opposed to the sequence, as I understand. Do you see that as causing an issue between a 110 kilometre per hour zone coming down to an 80 kilometre per hour zone and all of a sudden having to stop for traffic?

Mr MEYER - No. That's how the road is designed, I guess, because if you want to turn in or out of Pittwater Road, you would have to slow down at the traffic signals, and then the traffic signals would commence, and you would speed up towards the 100 kilometre per hour zone. It would be different if it was a roundabout or another method.

CHAIR - For the most part, you believe it will be flowing more often than not. Do we have the number of vehicles negotiating Pittwater Road?

Mr MEYER - I think it's around 500 vehicles per day. Barilla Bay and the Tasman Golf Club are a lot less than that. They're quite insignificant compared to the volume of Tasman Highway traffic.

Shared Pedestrian and Cycle Path

4.10 The Committee noted that a shared pedestrian and cycle path would be constructed as part of the project. The Committee sought further information on need for and potential use of the shared path and how it has been designed in to the project:

CHAIR - As part of the scope, you mention a separated cycleway. Was there a particular reason why that occurred? Do you have the numbers of cyclists who use this area, and is that the reason why it's being considered?

Mr MEYER - There are high volumes of cyclists who use the Clarence City Council's bicycle networks, and they have a policy of using lots of pathways and cycleways. The Midway Point, Sorell and southern beaches becomes a bit of an isolated community in terms of connectivity with Clarence.

One of the ways to increase that connectivity is to put in separated shared cycle and walking paths, so they can walk their dogs across the causeways. They can go for a ride if they want to commute to town. If they want to commute from Sorell to town, it's only 20 kilometres. From Sorell they can easily commute on this new shared facility.

While the volume itself isn't huge, it is difficult, and it has to be on the highway at the moment. It is more of a 'build it and they will come' scenario, and trying to have connectivity between those two municipalities rather than have them as isolated council areas on the edges of greater Hobart.

Mr MITCHELL - We certainly had feedback when we did Social Pinpoint that we should be providing improved cycle access between Sorell and the airport, across all of these south-east traffic solution projects.

We had 17 people comment that improved cycle access should be provided, and those comments received about 60 likes, so I think people do want improved cycle access.

We have some further information that says people's key concerns with the cycle paths is that they be separated from the fishing areas - which would be off the causeways and probably on McGee's Bridge - and that cyclists shouldn't have to cross the highway. That is why, throughout these projects, we're moving the cycleway so that it's on the northern side of the highway from Sorell through to the airport.

CHAIR - It's bidirectional.

Mr MITCHELL - Yes. At the moment the cycleway is on the southern side on the Midway Point causeway, and then it switches over to the northern side on the Sorell causeway, which means cyclists have to cross the road. They cross it adjacent to the airport, where we parked this morning for the site visit, and then they also cross it at Midway Point.

Ms BUTLER - For the record, can you explain why the decision was made for the cycleway to be placed on the northern-bound side, not the southern-bound side?

Mr MITCHELL - I think part of the reason is that when it gets to McGee's Bridge, all the fishing is done on the southern side. If we provide a cycleway on the northern side, it will separate it from where the people fishing are. It was also in our heads that we would duplicate the western causeway first. That solves the problem straight away.

If we put the cycleway on the northern side, that work gets done first, and cyclists can remain on that side. They don't have to wait until the eastern causeway - the Sorell causeway - is duplicated before they end up with a continuous cycleway on the northern side.

Mr MEYER - The other major reason we did it on the northern side because where the Hobart Airport is and the current highway, we couldn't encroach into the airport apron on the southern side at that location. It had to be on north there, and we wanted it to continue on the same side all the way through.

CHAIR - You have Milford on the other side.

Mr MEYER - That's right.

CHAIR - With respect to that cycleway being added to this project, I don't know where it goes to, once it gets to the end of this project going west.

Mr MEYER - It connects to the current cycle networks in both municipalities.

CHAIR - There is a cycleway that comes from the Clarence side. Does it come through Cambridge?

Mr MEYER - Yes, there's a cycleway along Kennedy Drive. One will connect to Hobart Airport, and then there's also one through the Seven Mile Beach area, so they all connect to the existing.

You'll be able to ride your bike once you get to Hobart Airport, and then you connect onto the Kennedy Drive cycleway, and then you go onto a number of shared and separated pathways through Clarence.

Impact on the Golf Course

- 4.11 The Committee understood that the proposed works would have a direct impact on the Tasmania Golf Club, and that the Department would be undertaking remedial works to ensure that it could continue operating to its current standard post construction. The Committee sought further information on how the Department had balanced the needs and impact on the golf club against the potential for having a straighter section of highway at a higher speed limit.

Ms BUTLER - Can I ask a question around the decision not to widen the road and keep the 100 kilometres in conjunction with the saving of the actual golf course itself. Can I ask how that decision was made and what kind of submissions or lobbying or so forth may have come from people who use that golf course, and what the membership is there, and what was involved in that decision-making process?

Mr MEYER - We received significant submissions.

Ms BUTLER - I am a keen supporter of golf myself, but I am just interested in the process itself and how that decision was made that the golf course was more important than it being 100 kilometres an hour, potentially?

Mr MEYER - When it went out for public consultation we received significant submissions, both from the people who use and enjoy the Tasmania Golf Club and from people who are more interested in the environment side of things on the Milford Forest and also from the Hobart Airport commercial arrangements. We just weighed all those issues up essentially and didn't think that there was enough benefit and enough need to continue with that option of the 100 kilometres per hour.

- 4.12 The Committee also questioned the Department's witnesses on the extent of remedial works that would be undertaken:

Ms BUTLER - And we might go into it later on, but there are remedial works to the golf course. How much will that cost as an estimate to be able to make sure that the road and the new section so it is impeding into the golf course area, how much is that going to cost to make it an area which the golf course can still use to play on, I suppose is the best way to explain it? Remedial, to have it up to scratch for it to be the usual functioning golf course.

Mr MEYER - Sure. The alignment of the sixteenth fairway is quite close to the highway now, so by building this road and moving into that alignment makes that fairway unplayable so on a like-for-like principle, which is how we do up all our road construction projects, we would have to reconstruct that fairway. That pushes it further north which means that we now have to reconstruct the seventeenth fairway as well. In terms of price, we will be releasing one tender for the whole package of works but we estimate it will be over \$1 million worth of work.

CHAIR - There's a dam in that though too, isn't there?

Mr MEYER - And there's a dam that will need to be filled in and relocated - a re-use water recycle dam that they use to water the golf course.

Ms BUTLER - Just to make sure it's on the record, before you stated that if that section of road was made wider enough to allow 100 kilometres per hour travel, that could mean the closure of the golf course. Is that correct? Can you make golf courses smaller? Is that how it works?

Mr MEYER - No. The Tasmania Golf Course is a high-standard golf course. They use it for national events. I can't think of the exact words but it is at a certain standard. It requires 18 holes and it requires fairways of up to five par. If we did much more acquisition onto the golf course then they wouldn't be able to achieve that current standard which they need for

their national competitions and for their members who pay fees to attend and those sorts of things.

4.13 The Committee also sought to understand the nature of any compensation that would be paid to the Tasmania Golf Club:

Mr MEYER - ... We have reached an agreement with the Tasmania Golf Club on all aspects on redevelopment of the course. As per the other landholders, there is still discussion around compensation.

CHAIR - ... I am assuming with the golf course that the government is paying for the works at the golf club, or is it shared?

Mr MEYER - No, the government's paying.

CHAIR - That's as per due process, that always happens if you are putting in a road and it interrupts the functioning of a business like that?

Mr MEYER - Any impacts the road construction has on private property or businesses is either repaired or is part of the compensation process.

CHAIR - ... is the reconstruction that you are doing considered enough for the golf club? As long as you do this, are they happy to let that go or is the Government purchasing that land? What is the score?

Mr MEYER - It is the acquisition of the golf club land that needs to be compensated. So, it is loss of land, same as for Milford. The impact to their business is what they are concerned about. So, when we redesign the golf club, they won't be able to play on that golf club, and so, there is an impact to their members and to the club.

CHAIR - So, you are paying a land compensation as well as a business impact compensation?

Mr MEYER - That's correct.

Assessment of the Project under the EPBC Act

4.14 The Committee noted that because of the potential impact on the threatened orchid species located on the Milford property, the project needed to be referred by the Department of State Growth for assessment and approval under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act). The Committee questioned the Department's witnesses on progress toward receiving EPBC approval:

CHAIR - ... You did environmental investigations in 2019, the concept was confirmed in 2019, and EPBC approval November 2021. Is that going to happen by November?

Have you been given any heads-up on the EPBC approval?

Mr MEYER - No, that won't happen. We just submitted our last piece of correspondence back to the EPBC, so we expect that they might advertise it towards the end of this year. It generally takes three to six months then, to go through their assessment process.

Mr TUCKER - ... Going back to the EPBC approval. How long has it taken us so far, to get the referral ready?

Mr MEYER - We started it close to 12 months ago.

Mr TUCKER - Are you expecting any submissions against it?

Mr MEYER - It's hard to know. I expect we will, given the close proximity to the orchids.

Mr TUCKER - You're hopeful that referral process will be approved in six months? You are saying three to six months?

Mr MEYER - Yes. Once the EPBC accepts the information, they then advertise it, and it goes through a community consultation process under the EPBC Act.

Then any issues raised during that process come back to us as the proponent to provide comments and to address. Then the EPBC assesses all the information and goes through their process.

Planning Permit for the Project

4.15 The Committee questioned the Department's witnesses on the status of the planning permit for the project:

CHAIR - And the planning permit?

Mr MEYER - We have received the planning permit.

CHAIR - And what is the status of that?

Mr MEYER - We have a planning permit.

CHAIR - Is that being challenged?

Mr MEYER - Yes. There were three submissions to the development application. Those three submissions have now followed through with a referral to the Resource Planning Tribunal.

CHAIR - And what is the status at this point?

Mr MEYER - There is a hearing scheduled for 22 November.

CHAIR - No mediation?

Mr MEYER - We underwent mediation yesterday, which was unsuccessful.

CHAIR -When will that be heard?

Mr MEYER - The 22-24 November is the hearing.

There will be a decision made by 20 December, I understand.

.....We already have the planning permit. We're still going through the RMPAT appeal. Things may change, but our assessment is that there's limited grounds for that permit to be overruled.

Concerns Raised in Submissions

4.16 In response to the public invitation the Committee received the following submissions:

- Submission from Mr Matt Cocker, Chief Operating Officer, Hobart International Airport. This submission highlighted the need for the Aviation Rescue Fire Fighting Service (ARFFS) to have unimpeded road access to the Milford property in the event of an aviation emergency;
- Submission from Mr Geoff Curry. Mr Curry expressed the view that the project was not the best solution, was not fit-for purpose, and would have a significant impact on the viability of the Milford property and the threatened orchid species present in Milford Forest. Mr Curry also submitted that a better option would be acquiring the Tasmania Golf Club in order to build a straight section of

- highway connecting to the Midway Point Causeway, thereby removing the impact on the Milford Forest habitat and eliminating the need for EPBC referral;
- Submission from Mr Justin Goc, General Manager, Barilla Bay Seafoods. Mr Goc expressed concerns about the project, including the potential adverse impacts on his business due to the changed access arrangements, the location of the businesses' signage in relation to the proposed new road alignment, and the impact on oyster farms due to potential increases in stormwater runoff in to the bay from a larger road surface area;
 - Submission from Ms Robyn Lewis, owner of the Milford property. Ms Lewis expressed a number of concerns about the project including:
 - The potential impact on the habitat of Milford Forest, in particular the potential adverse impacts on the 2 threatened orchid species only found in this location;
 - The project did not meet the need or prospective public value criteria specified in the Public Works Committee Act 1914 and which the Committee shall have regard to when considering a public work;
 - The perceived lack of rigour in determining what would be the best solution to reducing traffic congestion and improving travel time on the Tasman Highway;
 - The failure to adequately consider other solutions;
 - The perceived failure of a range of planning and environmental assessment processes;
 - The perceived poor community consultation undertaken by the proponent; and
 - The apparent lack of access to the Milford property from Pittwater Road.

4.17 The Committee received both written and verbal evidence from some submitters regarding the planning and environmental assessment processes the proposed works were subject to by other bodies. Some of this evidence appeared to be given on the basis that the Committee was able to review the proceedings and decisions of such other bodies. It was submitted that the Committee should reject the proposed works on the basis there were deficiencies in these processes. The Committee was content to hear such evidence concerning the perceived inadequacy of other planning and assessment processes on the basis that it provided background to certain aspects of the development. Such evidence however, largely dealt with matters outside of those the Committee is obliged under the Act to have regard to in its deliberations.

4.18 At the public hearing, Mr Cocker outlined his concerns regarding access to the Milford property for aviation emergency response needs:

Mr COCKER - Thank you. As an airport operator, Hobart Airport is required to consider Civil Aviation Safety Authority needs when it comes to emergency response to aviation incidents that occur within the footprint of the airfield, or within close proximity to the airfield.

Our submission has indicated that potentially, there could be some improvements to off-airport access, particularly to our neighbouring property, Milford. It has indicated in an appendix to that submission where some improved access locations may be.

We've been working closely with Department of State Growth on the plans for the Tasman Highway improvements for a couple of years now. Generally, we're accepting and accept the plans as they have been submitted. However, in this particular case we need to be mindful of access arrangements for access to the Milford property to ensure that ready, unimpeded access could be achieved by emergency services including our aviation rescue and fire-fighting services which is on the airport - a Commonwealth response agency - and also Tasmania Fire Service and other emergency response agencies who may need to respond for particular reasons; for example, aviation incidents or potentially even fire purposes.

..... I would mention that as a result of these works, it would appear that there is a barrier in the centre of the Tasman Highway from that intersection and all the way up, potentially, towards the Midway Point Causeway.

Currently there is an access route that can give ready access to the north-eastern part of Milford, and that's readily accessible from the Tasman Highway. However, the inclusion of the centre barrier would impede any vehicle moving from, let's say, the Hobart end of the Tasman Highway towards that direction.

..... They wouldn't be able to access that anymore. That was our indication. We'd had previous discussions to ensure that we were mindful of that, and mindful of ready access being available off Pittwater Road, to substitute the current access point that's available. That had been discussed, and I think it has been considered in these plans, but only one access point has been identified at this point, approximately 800 to 900 metres down Pittwater Road.

..... On our side of Pittwater Road, there are two emergency access gates, which are frangible gates..... They are called 'crash gates'. They were aligned to some potential entry points onto Milford. Going back to the point of losing an access point off the Tasman Highway, we are simply suggesting that it could be replicated closer towards the intersection of Tasman and Pittwater, opposite our frangible gate, gate 8.

..... It's closer towards the Tasman/Pittwater Road intersection.

..... We're aware that Milford are in discussions on some potential access points because it's not only for emergency services responding to an aviation incident. It's certainly our interest to ensure we have ready access, because the identified area further down Pittwater Road would take some time for a response agency to make their way down to that gate, and then make their way back up to the northern point of Milford. A ready access point closer to the intersection would be handy.

4.19 The Committee asked Mr Cocker to outline the potential impact of not having appropriate access to the Milford property:

Ms BUTLER - Without an access solution, would that undermine the standards that you have to adhere to at the airport?

Mr COCKER - It would certainly take more time to respond to an incident, particularly in the north-eastern corner or the northern part of Milford, with the only identified access point currently being the one further down Pittwater Road. I believe there would then be some impediment to moving from that access point up to the northern part of Milford, with forests and trees and whatnot, for [fire] tenders that might be responding - also being mindful of the fact that there are environmentally significant portions of Milford.

An identified location where ready access was available closer to the Tasman Highway/Pittwater Road intersection would be advantageous.

4.20 The Committee questioned Mr Meyer concerning access to the Milford property for aviation emergency responders:

CHAIR -..... from Hobart International Airport, do you have any comments in regard to the access issues there that they're talking about to Milford?

Mr MEYER - The final designs already do include an access off Pittwater Rd.

.....The design includes a gateway for access [to Milford] for TasWater to service their pipeline and for Hobart Airport.

- 4.21 At the public hearing, Mr Goc reiterated his concerns regarding the possible negative impacts on his business. Mr Goc also outlined his concerns with the planning process and what he felt was a lack of consultation from the Department of State Growth with him about how the project would affect his business:

Mr GOC -I live and breathe all the issues associated with the road; but, that is obviously going to have a direct impact on our business during construction and obviously with the changing of the interchange into our business.

After quite a bit of discussion with both the department and the council, we have got to the crossroads where there are really no other alternatives for me, other than to speak to you guys today about the access issues for my property.

Most of the development application and applicable works have been exempt. In my layman's understanding, that means that, essentially, there is no other research or anything that has to be undertaken. Basically, all the things applicable to my business are exempt.

I would just like to understand, a) how that occurs, and b) whether it is fair and equitable in such a large development application to use exemptions that broadly.

... ..For me, the main issue is the removal of the left-hand access into my property.

Ease of access, particularly for tourist businesses, is vital. We have many international tourists coming through. You would think, getting into my business would be very difficult, but unfortunately Google maps doesn't do the right thing for us, and if we lose that left-hand access into our property, then it is going to have an impact.

What that impact is, I couldn't tell you. It is very costly to get experts to go and find out all this information.

Strangely enough, today was the first time I have heard any information regarding why the bike lane is being put on outside of the property. It just highlights to me that, in terms of stakeholder engagement, there really hasn't been a hell of a lot of information being passed on to my business in regards to things that are going to have significant impacts on our business.

I appreciate the department's logic today, and I can certainly understand that; but unfortunately, today is the first time I heard about it.

That bike lane and the loss of the left-hand access I think are almost in conjunction with each other.

Signage. We erected a significantly costly sign. I believe that will be the wrong orientation for how the road is.

That is one potential concession that the department may be looking at. I don't have any firm details associated around that.

Stormwater management, particularly with the extra road coverage. Ultimately the main heartbeat of our operations is oyster farming.

I have alluded to the issues with water quality. More stormwater, more run-off will ultimately end up in our bays. The old infrastructure that we have presently, in and around our area, unfortunately can't handle inundation. To give you an example, in the last year and a half - 60 odd weeks - we have been closed for a third of that time from inundation of old infrastructure.

That has an incredible impact on how much I can sell, and obviously, how much more we can sell in the future, and the risk profile facing our business.

4.22 The Committee sought further information from Mr Goc about his views on the impacts on his business and his dealings with the Department of State Growth:

Ms BUTLER - Where are you at with whether you will be compensated at this point in time for that potential loss of business from not having that left turn?

Mr GOC - I've never had a conversation with the department in regards to anything concerning my submission today. I was involved in the stakeholder consultation, which was involved with a consultant, but at no point have I had a meeting with the department coming out and explaining or even looking at the issues that I have.

... .. I think because there is no land being acquired, there hasn't been any need to have that conversation, which again, I find somewhat strange.

Ms BUTLER -... .. Another question, about the significance of that signage being in the wrong place with the new road. How out of angle will that be? How far are you into those negotiations with the department about moving that signage, or how can they help you with that? Has there been much communication there?

Mr GOC - I haven't had any communication.

Ms BUTLER -... .. In your perspective, would there be additional flooding? Do you think that could occur in that area? Is that area prone to flooding?

Mr GOC - The intensity of the rain generally dictates whether we get inundated in our old infrastructure. In the time that I have been back in Tasmania since 2010, the development on that side of the river around our bay has been significant. Unfortunately, once you build vast quantities of concrete that captures water, it has to go somewhere. Ultimately, the more water coming down our drains - it should be going down one way but it is going everywhere and, unfortunately, it ends up in our bay. And because the bay is hard to see, it becomes almost like the sink for everything.

More roads; we have to build the roads. I'm not suggesting we don't have to build the roads. But with more roads, ultimately there is going to be more water caught and it has to go somewhere. Whether it goes Milford side or whether it goes into the golf course side or my side, it ultimately ends up in either at Five Mile [Beach] or in up at Pittwater.

Ms BUTLER - Has that consultation or communication occurred with the department, and has there been any indication that they are willing to work around that with you?

Mr GOC - I haven't had any communication about stormwater. It's not just me as an oyster farm in Pittwater, there are about five of us there. We probably employ altogether about 100 people in the regional area. As I said, I have not had any communication from the department regarding stormwater other than what is in the development application.

Ms BUTLER - I was also interested around the carpark facilities because I think they're at the front of your venue, if that's correct. Would that be impacted? I wasn't sure from the mapping.

Mr GOC - I believe it's not. The major change is the bike lane going past and losing the left-hand access and obviously we're going down to the new intersection to come back in.

Ms BUTLER - For traffic coming from the southern end, for instance, you have tourists that are doing the loop and they're coming up through Sorell. How would they access your property - by turning left, I suppose, at the lights at Pittwater? Is that correct?

Mr GOC - Yes, they would have to use the new intersection. I realise that you can't cross dual carriageways and that's not what I'm arguing. Certainly people from the Sorell direction would have to use the new intersection.

Ms BUTLER - Has there been any indication that signage for your business may be able to be placed near that Pittwater area to identify where you are because it's not going to be that visible until you've gone past already? Have you had that kind of communication at this stage?

Mr GOC - There has been some mention of signage but I would not have any details as to the scale, how much, whether I need a new council approval to move the existing sign. I haven't had any information regarding that.

CHAIR - ... You're concerned about exemptions for the department not to have to deal with your issues at all. Can you clarify that?

Mr GOC - That's my understanding, talking to respective professionals in the industry. Hopefully, I haven't got it wrong. Essentially, exemptions in my case, particularly to the bike track, it's exempt, so when I ask for clarification it's just exempt.

4.23 The Committee then questioned the Department's witnesses on the matters raised by Mr Goc. Specifically, the Committee asked them to address the degree of consultation, the need for and impact of the changed access, the issues with the Barilla Bay Seafoods signage and the project's impact on stormwater:

CHAIR - ... With respect to Mr Goc, he talked about exemptions so you didn't have to deal with his issues. Can you describe what the circumstance was there? Why you were not forced to deal with issues of stormwater and the like?

Mr MEYER - The stormwater is covered through the development application. The impact in terms of the planning requirements in that overlay, I am not a planning expert, but the consultants just followed the planning scheme requirements and talked to council and that was what was required. We were following legislation.

CHAIR - So why wasn't Barilla Bay Oysters consulted?

Mr MEYER - They were consulted, but I guess....they might not have been consulted much recently because for the last 12 months or so while we have been working through on the approvals which haven't impacted that business much at all recently.

Mr MITCHELL - Certainly we met with Barilla Bay Oysters once on 21 June 2018 and secondly on 21 August 2018 we met with Barilla Bay Oysters.

CHAIR - Did you talk about any of the signage issues he was going to have?

Mr MITCHELL - This was really early on in the design of the projects, when we were very much looking at the early options so I don't think we got down to talking about different signs. We have looked at what signage options we can provide Barilla Bay Oysters under the current design. They are limited somewhat in that we can only provide any business a certain type of tourist sign which is fairly non-descript in nature. We can give standard tourist signs to businesses in our road corridor.

CHAIR - If he is being impacted significantly because they are going to be travelling past his property and can't turn left into it until further down.

Mr MITCHELL - They are going to have to travel an extra 200 metres, so 100 metres past the business and into the intersection and then 100 metres back the other way to enter the car park of Barilla Bay Oysters. We are talking about 200 metres distance.

CHAIR - That is fine but his signs aren't aligned to that.

Mr MEYER - On that, I was not aware of the private signs that his business has which is different to our directional signage. So, I will take that as something we probably need to look at.

CHAIR - You will consult with him on that?

Mr MEYER - Sure.

CHAIR - The left-hand access, is there a reason that you cannot have a bleed out, if it can be put that way, with an arrow going straight into his property.

Mr MEYER - There are two reasons. For the Hobart Airport interchange when you are coming from Kennedy Drive, there is a slip lane which comes down the side of the highway and then merges onto the highway. The merge length between that and the start is 900 metres which

is the minimum of that speed. If you then have an access there that is also too close, it is only 100 metres away from the next access which is the traffic signals, so that is too close and is cause for accidents.

Mr MITCHELL - There will also be an additional conflict point with the cycle lane, the shared path for the cyclists. It would be an additional point where cyclists could get knocked off.

Mr MEYER - The issue is with the new Hobart Airport Interchange arrangement, you have the off ramps to the side. They are going at speed to get to merge into the highway, and then pretty much within a few hundred metres there'd be heavy vehicles trying to go back to go into the -.

CHAIR - You have a car speeding up, coming out towards a zip situation, and then you have another car wanting to come across that and go in to the left. I can see the point.

Mr MEYER - We thought the design we had come up with was okay, because they would see the business, they would have 100 metres to slow down for the traffic signals, then turn and come back.

CHAIR - The other issue he raised was to do with sewage spills and also stormwater, and the impact on the business, and how stormwater from this particular extra road width is going to exacerbate it, rather than improve it. Is anything being done for the way stormwater is dealt with to stop it immediately flowing out into Barilla Bay?

Mr MEYER - I understand the issues with the oysters because that is one of the items we are looking at for the causeway project where there are sea snails along there, and they are being degraded by the amount of stormwater that goes into Pittwater, and the overflows and the sewage treatment plant at Cambridge. The highway may contribute to that, but I think that is insignificant in terms of the current issues that are already there.

4.24 At the public hearing, Mr Curry noted his interest in the project mainly related to the orchid species present at Milford and suggested their significance had not been given due consideration. Mr Curry also highlighted that none of the design options presented for consideration were suitable and was concerned that the works would not fix the problematic bend known as Lewis Corner:

Mr CURRY - I'm an amateur field botanist. My interest in this is purely the orchids at Milford. They are three EPBC-listed orchids and particularly the two critically endangered orchids that only grow at Milford. I'm the national conservation officer for Australasian Native Orchid Society and the president of the volunteer group Threatened Plants Tasmania.

I've been involved with these surveys for the orchids at Milford for the last 10 years. They were originally done under the guidance of DPIPWE. Through budgetary cuts and personnel changes, I now run the orchid surveys at Milford and Mrs Lewis and myself write the report each year for the orchids.

When the consultation process was first brought up, I was one of the advocates that said this: we were given two options, a bad option and a really bad option. I advocated publicly that we had to change it from orchids versus golf because I believed that was the process that State Growth put in place, which I believed to be wrong, where they simply asked 'should we build a road in the orchids or should we build a road on the golf club?'

I'm at a point where I believe the road will go ahead, there's no issue about that, it's to go ahead. I would just like to see it done to the best for the state and for the environment. Throughout State Growth's submission to you here this afternoon, there's no talk of the environment. It's a secondary matter to them whereas, to me, it's the primary matter. When I looked at this process here, I looked through the five criteria that you people assess with and, as you will read, is it the best solution to meet the identified needs? No.

Looking at it, with the golf course, there's 14 golf courses within 25 km of Pittwater. That's an awful lot of golf courses when you consider that there's only one place on earth that these

orchids grow, which is a private property across the road. That's the basis that I put a submission in here. I don't believe we're giving full credit to the significance of the orchids.

... .. The highway goes, if it follows the proposal, it's going in at 80 kilometres per hour with a set of traffic lights in the middle of it on a very cramped footprint; that it's taking as little of Milford and as little of the golf course as we can possibly do. It's not straightening the road, it's still leaving the infamous Lewis corner, just before the Milford entry; it's still going to have a bend in the road... ..

... .. That will remain, it's just next to the Milford entrance. I just question is this the best use of government funds trying to squeeze a four-lane highway at 80 kilometres per hour onto a cramped footprint?

4.25 The Committee questioned Mr Curry on the significance of the orchids present in Milford Forest and how they may be impacted:

CHAIR - What about the orchids themselves? Do you want to comment there in terms of where the road is in relation to the orchids?

Mr CURRY - The closest orchids, the Milford Leek-orchid, we identified seven plants last year within about 15 metres of the centre line of the new road, so they'll be quite close to the new road construction.

... .. Yes, it's not far. And of that species of orchid, there's only about 350 of them left in the world. If we damage some of that habitat -

CHAIR - Which orchid is this?

Mr CURRY - The Milford Leek-orchid.

CHAIR - And is that the one that only happens at Milford?

Mr CURRY - Yes, that is correct.

CHAIR - Those 300-odd are all on Milford obviously?

Mr CURRY - Yes, in Milford forest. These are not plants that we can just dig up and take home and put in your garden or move somewhere. They have a relationship with microscopic fungi that grows in the ground. They can't just be picked up and moved. They need the forest, they need the habitat and there's not a lot of research being done on it because there's no money involved in it. The relationship between the eucalyptus viminalis and the orchids there, there is a relationship, a symbiotic relationship of which I'm not qualified to talk about, other than I know it's there. It's recognised. There's been no studies done on those two specific orchids on that site, but there is a symbiotic relationship between the forest and the orchids. If we damage the forest or modify the forest, we'll probably kill the orchids.

Ms BUTLER - How far away are the orchids from the construction zone area, do you believe, based on the maps we have? How far would the proximity need to be away from those orchids, in your opinion or your understanding, for it not to have some impact? Surely, the actual movement itself would, potentially, if they're really fragile. Could you talk me through that?

Mr CURRY - Last year, when we surveyed for the Milford Leek Orchid, we discovered, off the top of my head, it was seven plants growing up near the Tasman Highway. They were marked with GPS and site-identified. The identification of them was verified by Andrew North from North Barker, who is the consultant ecologist for this project. Andy came on site, saw the site, recorded the site and verified the identity of the orchids. I am not exactly sure, but they were within about 20 metres of the road.

Along the highway, there is going to be clearing of some of the big remnant trees to make way for the highway. That will open up the forest to more wind, which will probably affect the other, smaller trees on the site because the big trees are presently a wind barrier to them. It will change the wind across the site. No-one seems to know exactly what impact that is going to have on the orchids.

As to road works themselves, the vibration and so on, there is no blasting to be done there, I don't believe, so that won't impact the orchids a lot.

- 4.26 The Committee questioned the Department's witnesses on the claims made by Mr Curry about the lack of consideration for the environment in planning and designing the project:

CHAIR - ... Mr Curry raised the issue of not much talk about the environment. Can you just appraise the committee of the level of work that was done in relation to environmental aspects to deal with the orchids and the like? You talk about North Barker and those sorts of things. Can you just tell us how much work actually went into that?

Mr MEYER - There has been substantial work that has gone into the project in terms of environment values. Of course, we are limited. We can only look at property we can get access to. We have looked at quite a few aspects of the Milford property and a lot of the reports are public reports and that has all been incorporated.

We have had extensive investigations on some of the airport land and the golf course land, and it is all captured in reports and part of the development application and will be part of the EPBC referral.

CHAIR - Are they two-page reports or two hundred-page reports?

Mr MEYER - Oh no. Significant.

- 4.27 Ms Lewis appeared before the Committee at the public hearing and gave a brief overview of the Milford property, including the significance of Milford Forest and the threatened orchid species:

Ms LEWIS - ... I am the current custodian of Milford Forest, which is 40 hectares, part of the Milford property, which is 120 hectares, a very long, narrow property adjacent to the Tasman Highway, which I believe will be significantly impacted by the proposed development as it is currently designed, and in particular, how it is proposed to be implemented at the moment.

It has been managed for conservation since 1829, at our own cost. We do not charge government for any of this, so we are looking after the two endemic orchids.

... There are two critically endangered, and one endangered. So, there are three species but two have got the absolute highest rating of the EPBC, and the other one is the next tier down, because it is found on other sites not on Milford. Yes, there are three species, with two of them endemic to the farm.

There are 20 other orchid species there. There are other federally listed species of flora. It is regarded as probably the most biodiverse habitat in the Clarence municipality and one of the most biodiverse habitats in lowland Tasmania.

I think it is important to realise it is a reference to what an untouched well-managed forest of this type should look like. It looks like it would have done pretty much in Aboriginal times, or even, perhaps, prior to that.

... It is a very important unique national treasure and it's a little bit like putting a highway next to the botanic gardens, as an analogy. We have to treat this with respect and care, not just for us. We've been looking after it for 200 years and our Aboriginal forebears before this. If it's going to survive another 200 years, it has to be treated with care. That's one of my great concerns, that there seems to be a lack of care and a lack of consideration for the environment, and use of loop holes to perhaps not do the best thing that is possible.

- 4.28 Ms Lewis expressed a strong view that the consultation process, especially with those parties adjacent and directly impacted by the works, had been unsatisfactory:

Ms LEWIS - Consultation, inadequate consultation. Coming and telling people what you're going to do is not listening. Consultation is about gathering evidence, listening, incorporating that, having round-table discussions. For example, when this project started, to be fair to my friends here from State Growth, they weren't there. It was Pitt and Sherry we were dealing with most of the time. Pitt and Sherry would go to the golf club, tell them one thing. They would come to me on the same day, tell me something else. Then they would go over to the Hobart Airport and tell them the third thing and they wouldn't go to Justin Goc at all. Justin is quite correct, he was left out.

We got a bit cheesed off about this. I'm on the airport consultation committee so I would ring up Matthew and ask, 'What did they say to you?', and we were all being told different things. We decided to have joint meetings, which were hosted by Hobart Airport, and with the mayor and the engineers of Sorell and Clarence both present and that actually achieved a lot. But I think our big mistake was we stopped those meetings because we thought things had been agreed and there have been a lot of things that have gone backwards since then.

CHAIR - How long ago are we talking about here?

Ms LEWIS - We were doing that in 2019. Probably stopped those in early 2020 when it was agreed that we've got, as various other people have said, a compromise situation sitting in the middle, which is sort of like, as their own consultant described it, the best of the worst, really. We stopped about then and there has been a lot of going backwards since that point.

... .. I think a lot of it is the consultation has been, we believe, inadequate. For example, I have five businesses on this property. I've never once been asked what they are. It has been described as residential.

... .. No-one has ever asked me. It's been described as residential all along. The gold-plated treatment that has been received by the golf club has definitely not been extended to me. As I wrote in my introduction, I first heard about this project on the radio.

... .. As I said, I first heard about this project on the radio, which is not adequate. The golf club was already forewarned and forearmed well before I was. They had their media releases ready, and within two weeks they had managed to get Clarence Council to pass a motion - even when the consultation period had only just opened, and before it had even finished - to pass a motion saying no development would occur on the golf club site.

Where do you go from there? This is week two of consultation, when you just found out about this project. It was quite clear that the options were going to impact on Milford, and that ruled out a lot of other options, in my opinion, right from the beginning.

4.29 Ms Lewis also highlighted what she felt was a deficiency in relation to assessments taken under the EPBC Act, and the risks this presented:

Ms LEWIS - I want to clear up another misconception about the orchids and so on, that the EPBC only deal with listed species. The state environment act deals with habitat types. We're talking about dry *Eucalyptus viminalis*, DVC, and at the moment that forest type isn't listed under the EPBC. The EPBC people are about six years behind in assessing habitats. They've just listed wet *viminalis* as a habitat type, but they are so far behind.

There's protection at the state level for habitat, and there's protection at the federal level for the orchids - and, in theory, the wedge-tailed eagles, masked-owls, Tasmanian devils and spotted quolls that live there - but fauna seems to have been swept totally under the carpet in this project, unfortunately.

CHAIR - The EPBC doesn't deal with fauna?

Ms LEWIS - The EPBC doesn't deal with communities and habitat; it just deals with species. That's always been a weakness. It probably sounded good when they wrote it, but it is changing. As I said, they're about six years behind in their assessment.

There's no protection for the habitat and, as you heard from Mr Curry, these orchids grow in a symbiotic relationship with fungi in the soil, which are directly related to the white gums. If

the white gums go, they go too. We're talking about the extinction of two species as a possibility. It's a risk, and to my mind it's a risk that is not yet adequately dealt with.

- 4.30 Ms Lewis, like Mr Curry, raised the issue of the safety of Lewis Corner. As had been put forward in Mr Curry's submission, Ms Lewis was of the view that providing a straighter alignment, which would have significant impact on the golf club, would have been a better solution and provided greater protection to the threatened orchids in Milford Forest:

Ms LEWIS - ... One of the problems with what was described as Lewis Corner, which is actually the bend in the road where my driveway comes off, is that it's highly accident-prone previously.

... It's still a dangerous corner and to my view looking at removing that curvature would have been a good option and looking at making it 100 kilometres per hour, straightening it out, and that would unfortunately have necessitated more works in the golf club.

... The bend is towards Milford so if you cut the corner off it would actually be a huge benefit and protect the orchids probably 90 per cent.

- 4.31 The Committee sought further information from the Department's witnesses on the viability of this proposal:

Mr ELLIS - What would be the cost if a new straighter section of road was put through the golf course as suggested in terms of land acquisition?

Mr MEYER - ... my understanding was that the golf course was for sale a number of years ago for around \$5 million. So, I guess that would be the minimum you would have to buy it as a business. You couldn't just cut something in half like that. The further you move north the higher the terrain gets. Up on top they have the driving range, it's hilly, so you would have to excavate a lot of materials to build the road. You would obviously have to also acquire and shut down the Barilla Bay business because that is where the road alone would have to fall, so you are talking about two major businesses. Ultimately there was business at Barilla Bay that would have to be impacted.

CHAIR - It is pretty flat there on that inside corner, that large inside corner is a very flat area and it is a practice tee, isn't it?

Mr MEYER - Yeah you might be able to get away with not extending too much.

CHAIR - If you moved the alignment further out and straightened it a bit, it could reduce significantly the impact, could it not?

Mr MEYER - I guess the other problem is it has to realign back on to the Midway Causeway otherwise when constructing a causeway, you would have to build a whole new alignment.

CHAIR - You are only doing an 80-kilometre strip, so what I am saying why could you start realigning it through there. Couldn't you do that?

... I mean why would it be that much more expensive to do that? Why couldn't that be considered to move further away?

Mr MEYER - The impact to Tasmania Golf course would be significant and we are only taking about 15 metre on the Milford property, it is less than one hectare, not a significant impact. It may sound like a significant impact but actually isn't.

CHAIR - I am just saying, the golf course tees here, so they're going to move that over anyway. So, this area, I mean there is a shed, that might be a concern, but through there and you are just reducing that, you are not even interfering with that. I am just raising possibilities here.

Mr MEYER - We are actually already impacting that green that needs to be realigned. You then impact that fairway as well.

CHAIR - So, you are realigning that green anyway, so would it be that case that you couldn't chop off the bottom of the practice range, because they are going to be shooting back up hill anyway. Have you thought about having that conversation with them?

Mr MEYER - Yes. Our conversations that would essentially mean their courses couldn't be back to the standard that it is now. Or if you could even do an 18-hole golf course, I am not sure.

Mr ELLIS - Sven, are we talking if we took that option potentially a \$40 million project with acquisitions and different terrain and topography?

Mr MEYER - I don't know how much the cost would be but the option we put on the table does impact all four land owners. It only impacts them a little bit. If you pushed it either way to the top or the bottom you have significant impact on either of those businesses. There is no other way around it.

4.32 Ms Lewis also identified another option for resolving congestion on the Tasman Highway, and which had been raised during the consultation process. This proposal involved building a bridge connecting Seven Mile Beach to Dodges Ferry:

Ms LEWIS - The most frequently stated response was that an alternative crossing point should be considered,at Seven Mile Beach to connect with southern beaches... ..It would appear that this feedback has not been taken on board by anybody.

CHAIR - It'd be a fairly heavy project wouldn't it, when you think about it.

Ms LEWIS - Well, it would be, but again, you have to look at -

CHAIR - Compared to the extra lane width that might happen here.

Ms LEWIS - This is an extra lane, but then we are going to double both causeways. They are massive.

CHAIR - I appreciate what you are saying, but in terms of the spit and across to Dodges, you then have to look at what happens further south of that again, or east.

Ms LEWIS - Wind back time, and someone stood back and said, what is the best way to get from A to B, and get people to these areas. It is a triangle. The freight line is actually down Pittwater That has never been examined. It is probably too late.

4.33 The Committee questioned the Department's witnesses and sought to understand if this proposal had been considered, and whether it was a practicable and realistic option:

CHAIR -I know that one of the options that has been brought forward by public submissions received is a connection of Seven Mile Beach to Dodges Ferry. Did you seriously consider that, and what were your thoughts on that?

Mr MEYER - Following the first round of community consultation, there were quite a few comments saying have you looked at connectivity from Seven Mile Beach through to Dodges Ferry to Tiger Head.

We did investigate that option. The problem with that option is that you still have a significant number of vehicles in Midway Point and Sorell, so that would only service the Southern beaches area.

There are quite a lot of environmental issues. You would have to significantly upgrade Pittwater Road. There are environment issues in terms of going through the Seven or Five Mile Beach area.

There are quite a lot of maritime issues in terms of crossing that stretch of water, and then significant impacts on Dodges Ferry itself, because you are essentially putting a whole bunch of traffic into a current suburban area. That would only solve, say, less than half the number of vehicles.

CHAIR - Do you know the number that goes from Southern beaches through? Have you got a count on that?

Mr MEYER - Yes, we do.

I think it is around 10,000. I would have to check for you though.

CHAIR - Out of the 20.

Mr MEYER - Out of the 20.

It is quite a significant number that are in Southern beaches, but our assessment was, that in 20 years you would still have to upgrade the highway to four lanes, even if you did do that option.

CHAIR - Because of growth in -

Mr MEYER - Midway Point and Sorell.

Mr MEYER -... .. Generally, along a corridor like we have here, it is a transit corridor. Everything is geared up for people who live in that area. So, even if you did build a bridge across to Dodges Ferry, there are only a couple of shops there, so half of them will still go through Sorell to do all their shopping and business needs and everything else. I guess the policy is people move to certain locations, you have these transit corridors, buses, cars, trucks, everything else. The best methodology is to continue to upgrade those corridors.

4.34 Ms Lewis relayed the significant concerns she held regarding access to her property, and the negative impacts this would have. Ms Lewis understood the current property access was to be removed, and did not believe a suitable alternative property access had been provided by the Department in its current design:

Ms LEWIS - For example, my access. Apart from the business factor, I need to be able to get in and out. I was informed by Mr Myer that, no, they are not going to provide any accesses off Pittwater Road. I think that that is going to change but that was the last I was told that I was not getting any accesses and I would have to drive to Midway Point and turn around. I asked about the trucks and he said, 'you will have to drive them to Midway Point to turn them around'.

CHAIR - What sort of trucks are we talking about there?

Ms LEWIS - All sorts of farm vehicles. As Mr Curry pointed it is illegal to drive a B double across the causeway from either direction so this will mean that Milford Farm won't be able to have B doubles at all because they won't be able to come from the other direction either. Any farm truck, any agricultural machinery, picking day when we have got our vehicles going up and down to Frogmore Creek who take our wine, neck machines and all that sort of stuff won't be able to turn around at Midway Point I have discovered because as far as I understand it is only going to be light vehicles. They will have to do a round trip of 15 kilometres to Sorell and back where they, at the moment, have to drive up behind Woolworths and drive around there to turn around to come back. This also applies to fire trucks.

We are now in the most ludicrous situation with what I have been offered at the moment is to basically cut the farm off from any agricultural vehicles whatsoever. I do not think that is a fair and reasonable outcome at the moment.

CHAIR - How often do you have B doubles visit?

Ms LEWIS - Not very often but if sheep are going off now, a lot of sheep are collected in large vehicles. You might be coming in with a B double. We want to put a lot of rocks, for example, down along the foreshore to protect the foreshore, he might be coming in with that sort of thing. Not very often but even a large truck would have to drive to Sorell and turn around.

CHAIR - What would be your most common size truck?

Ms LEWIS - Whatever is used for moving livestock at the moment. It depends, if you want to take livestock and send them off they go to Longford now and whatever they turn up in that is what is supposed to be used. They compartmentalise so you get a little compartment on the truck and your sheep go into that.

CHAIR - If you cannot use the access -

Ms LEWIS - It is going to ruin four businesses out of five, basically.

CHAIR - Your solution is to have an access off Pittwater Road.

Ms LEWIS - We need an access off Pittwater Road and we need the fire service access at the top end of Pittwater Road which already exists, that needs to be reinstated and made suitable. Both of those need to be suitable for Hobart Airport. I think there was a little bit of confusion with Matt Cocker's presentation, there are two accesses required because the property is very long so they need to be able to get to the southern end as well as well as the northern end. He has given you a map, and it is actually correct on the map but when he mentioned it he was mainly talking about the one.

CHAIR - How far from the Pittwater Road intersection where the Tasman Highway is the southern gate?

Ms LEWIS - About 900 metres, nearly a kilometre. If they allow us to have it.

CHAIR - Have you spoken with Matt on that?

Ms LEWIS -Yes, he is aware of it.

CHAIR - And you're in agreement with that?

Ms LEWIS - Yes, we agree with those. Mr Myer told me I wasn't getting either of them. So, I am not in a very happy state of mind about that, obviously.

... .. I absolutely believe it is non-negotiable that I have a proper access, which we have started to discuss at the tribunal, but has yet to be resolved. The fire access needs to be resolved, because if the forest goes up in fire, the orchids are gone, but it is also a huge risk to Hobart Airport.

... .. We need fire access, TasWater needs their access. The new boundary fence is going to cut the current access path.

... .. They drive in off the highway. There's a path inside my fence.

... .. And it's been cut in several places. That needs to be reinstated, and we need a gate so they can actually get from the outside, onto -

CHAIR - Where would that gate be?

Ms LEWIS - That would be the gate up near Pittwater.

CHAIR - Right near the corner?

Ms LEWIS - Yes, but the corner's moving. There's going to be a sort of road reserve, so it won't actually be on the corner of the road. It will be inside a little road reserve, which seems logical, but where still hasn't been agreed on.

That access needs to have passing bays because if I happen to be up there in the middle of a bushfire, and TasWater's driving along, we need to be able to get past each other.

The same with my new driveway. If I get a new driveway, it needs to have passing bays. It's over a kilometre long, and it can't be three metres wide with trucks going one way, and other people going the other, and visitors to cellar doors and so on without being able to get past each other. I regard those as non-negotiable.

4.35 The Committee asked the Department's witnesses to address to concerns raised by Ms Lewis about access to the Milford property:

CHAIR - What about the access required by Milford?

Mr MEYER - As in the alternate access to the property?

CHAIR - Given that they can't have large trucks going -

Mr MEYER - Yes. We've been in consultation with Ms Lewis for, as you've heard, a couple of years now and we did work with her and we did develop up an access which goes through the landscaping business. We had that ready to go with the development application. Just prior to submission, Ms Lewis said she wasn't happy with that any more. We then worked with her again to do an access further down the road, which is the one 900 metres down. That wasn't ready for the development application submission because we only started working on it a few months ago because we assumed that the access we had agreed on would be one that we would submit with our application. So, we said to the developer, okay, development application without the alternate access, which is now the subject of the appeal. We have been working with the landholder to have an alternate access; we haven't been successful in agreeing on where that access may be.

CHAIR - I know it's subject to appeal and, without going to that, is that about the length of the access, passing arrangements and things like that, that Ms Lewis was talking about?

Mr MEYER - Yesterday we again said that we are happy to proceed with developing the new larger access but there are aspects that Ms Lewis would like that the department, I guess, cannot agree to because it's not what it considers like for like, in terms of extensive vegetation and fencing and those sorts of things.

CHAIR - With respect to the concern about viability of business and proper access, you appreciate the issue that Ms Lewis has in relation to that?

Mr MEYER - Yes, sure. We offered alternate access, we then offered another alternate access. We couldn't get agreement and so we then went back and said, 'We can't reach agreement on what this access will look like'. Under the acquisition for roads there's a compensation process. As I said, it's probably best dealt with through the office of the Valuer-General, if it's a compensation issue.

4.36 Ms Lewis also highlighted her concerns on how the project might negatively impact her property, the Milford Forest habitat and the impact his may have on the threatened orchids:

Ms LEWIS - As Geoff Curry pointed out earlier, what is done along the strip near the highway is going to have impacts inside. It's going to open up the canopy. So, there's a wind effect as well, which dries everything out but it will also open up the canopy and back to the orchids, they need about a 50 per cent canopy cover for proper flowering. Once it gets a bit more closed than that they don't do so well, and once it's more open they don't seem to do so well either.

So, it's all about a balance and at the moment this ecosystem is in balance and we've got to do, I believe, everything we can to retain that balance, especially with regard to the long-term impact and that's something that the EPBC does cover. It doesn't look at just direct impacts, it looks at indirect impacts as well. So, I believe extinction's a genuine threat. It's hopefully on the probability scale right now, not so high, but we've got to be very, very careful that we don't exacerbate that situation. And as I said, I'd view this as like putting a highway through or next to the Royal Botanic Gardens, only Milford forest is actually more sensitive than the Botanic Gardens and we have to be seen to be exhibiting a duty of care.

... .. Well, as current custodian, I believe it is my responsibility to do my best for these species. The responsibility has fallen on my shoulders. I am not going to walk away from that.

Milford needs to remain viable because I have to pay for it, and if this business is driven into insolvency, or if I have to sell to some developer, the outcome for the orchids won't be good at all.

... .. It is only a very narrow strip. It is only one hectare. It is right along the highway. As I said earlier, if it was just bush, it wouldn't matter. If it was just degraded land like it is over at the airport, or grazing land, it wouldn't matter. But, the problem is it's like a natural botanic garden, and it is the edge effect. Because it is a long narrow piece of forest, it is like the surface area of a sphere versus the surface area of something really long and narrow. You are going to have more edge effects if you are taking a strip off the side, because it is long and narrow. The overall area is insignificant, but it's the configuration of it and it is the management of the impact during the works that is a particular concern to me.

... .. We need a construction management plan, and I was encouraged earlier to hear a little bit about this. I haven't been given any details on that at all, but it needs to be independently supervised. It can't be left to the contractor.

... .. There needs to be a construction management plan that is actually supervised. There has to be accountability.

... .. Along the strip, particularly outside the orchids, there needs to be a construction management plan, and there needs to be some accountability, because someone drives a bulldozer in.

When we're going in to do our surveys, we have to sanitise our shoes. You can't bring fungi, you can't bring stuff into these orchids. We can't have machinery driving in there and people wandering around and having their lunch and saying, 'Look, I've seen an eagle over there, let's go for a walk.' It has to be managed properly in an ongoing way.

We need ongoing weed management. There'll be a lot of contamination, potentially, that has to be avoided during construction, but there's ongoing need for weed control, which I would like to see basically in perpetuity. It can be done reasonably cost-effectively. There are landcare groups who will do it, but they just need a bit of support to do it.

Potential Impacts on the Threatened Orchid Species on Milford

4.37 The Committee noted the concerns raised by Mr Curry and Ms Lewis about the potential impacts on the Milford Forest habitat and the threatened endemic orchid species. The Committee sought further information from the Department's witnesses on their understanding of how the project might impact the orchids, and what measures had been taken in the design to mitigate any potential impacts:

CHAIR -... .. understanding the criticality of this vegetation, with this option that you have chosen, how have you designed the limited impact that you believe that this option has to make sure that those orchid communities aren't overtly impacted?

Mr MEYER - There have been numerous surveys of the orchids on the Milford property over a long time frame conducted by the property owner and DPIPWE. We, as part of this project, have done I think three orchid surveys over the last three years. They only come out around this sort of time of year, through to January/February. The known location of the orchids is extremely well known. Orchids do pop up in different locations, depending on the climate of the year, but they have a general sort of habitat of where they sit and they might pop up here and then a metre across over there, but the cluster of where they are is all mapped and known. When we were looking at designing the highway, we knew where the orchids were. We also knew the other major items we need to avoid, so we designed the highway to avoid direct impact on any of the orchids.

CHAIR - Do we have any further comment on taking out the trees and causing possible detrimental effects to the orchids?

Mr MEYER - Only that there's already an edge effect of the highway and we leave in that edge effect.

CHAIR - How far are you moving that?

Mr MEYER - I'm not exactly sure, it changes, but it's between, like, one metre to 10 metres. It's like a diamond down towards the Pittwater intersection.

..... Again, that's all being considered as part of the EPBC referral and answering some of the questions that have come back.

Management of Environmental Impacts During and Post Construction

4.38 The Committee recognised the significant natural value of the Milford Forest habitat. The Committee also noted Ms Lewis' evidence about the fragile nature of this habitat. As a result, the Committee sought to understand how the Department would ensure that any potential detrimental impacts would be minimised or mitigated, both during construction and ongoing after completion of the works:

Mr TUCKER - Diseases and weeds with the building of the road.....how would that be managed?

Mr MEYER - Under our normal specifications, the contractor has to do a construction environmental management plan (CEMP). For this particular project, we're going to enhance the conditions that they require. It's going to be part of the EPBC referral as well. There will be weed and hygiene practices and protocols they need to adhere to, as well as a number of soil and water monitoring programs, and construction management processes.

Mr TUCKER - Say these processes aren't followed, what actions will be taken?

Mr MEYER - Then they're in breach of the contract conditions so the superintendent can refer them back to the contract and enforce those works. Yes, I'm not sure - there will be a number of other actions we can do to ensure the contractor follows the contract.

CHAIR - one of the other aspects that was brought out was to do with the management of the verges and consideration that quite often herbicides are used. Shedding off could damage the orchid community, for instance. Can you give us an understanding as to what would be done to stop that from occurring, or is there something already in place that stops herbicide usage in that area?

Mr MEYER - No, there currently isn't. It gets managed as per any other part of the roadside where they would treat nationally listed weeds and so forth as required. As part of this project, as part of the EPBC referral, we've developed an orchid impact assessment and mitigation plan. Essentially, that will set out over a 10-year period how we will manage that roadside area. Instead of using our normal roadside maintenance contractor, we will have a specialised contractor. There are a number of firms who do this around Tasmania, and it falls under what we call our Roadside Conservation Site Program. We have that across Tasmania for any areas of the state where the highway goes through threatened flora vegetation communities. Those particular areas have a plan, and you engage specialists to follow the plan in terms of monitoring and managing the roadside.

CHAIR - Will there be a construction management plan to make sure that this special forest, I'll put it that way, very special, is appropriately dealt with?

Mr MEYER For every construction contract we put out, the contractor has to do a construction environmental management plan. That's no different for this one. In terms of this project, because we're going through the EPBC assessment there are additional conditions

that will come through that process that they'll have to incorporate into their construction management plan.

CHAIR - And the issue of ongoing weed management, in terms of maintenance of the road? I think I mentioned whether there's herbicides and things being used, and we talked about it earlier this morning when we went on site?

Mr MEYER - Sure. As I explained before, this area will fall under our roadside conservation site program, which will be managed through a specialised independent vegetation management consultant, rather than just our maintenance contractor. So, that would include appropriate weed management and maintenance of the native vegetation.

Does the Project Meet Identified Needs and Provide Public Value?

4.39 In assessing any proposed public work, the Committee seeks assurance that each project is a good use of public funds, such that it meets identified needs and provides a public benefit. The Committee questioned Mr Meyer who confirmed that the project was meeting a clearly established need and provided a clear public benefit:

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

Mr MEYER - Yes, it does.

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

Mr MEYER - Yes.

CHAIR - Are the proposed works fit for purpose?

Mr MEYER - Yes.

CHAIR - It was raised about what the purpose was and it was interesting, some of the questions and queries that are raised in here. There was an observation that if you fixed the choke points then it might not need to have those extra lanes.

Mr MEYER - I guess from our traffic estimates and looking at it every day there's 20 000 vehicles a day who are stuck in traffic. I think they would say that's an extremely valuable project that they would like to get moving, yesterday.

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

Mr MEYER - Yes, they do.

CHAIR - Would you say that this is gold-plated? Would you say it's bare minimum? Can you give us an understanding of that?

Mr MEYER - Neither. It's our normal approach in terms of road construction.

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

Mr MEYER - Yes, they are.

CHAIR - Including the works that are going to be done on private property either side? You consider that they're works that are necessary under the circumstances?

Mr MEYER - As I explained before, we have impacts to properties as a result of the roadworks. You either need to compensate or repair those impacts back to as they were previously; so, yes.

5 DOCUMENTS TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE

5.1 The following documents were taken into evidence and considered by the Committee:

- *Tasman Highway Hobart Airport Interchange to Midway Point Causeway*, Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, Department of State Growth, 27 September 2021.
- Submission from Matt Cocker, COO, Hobart International Airport, 8 October 2021.
- Submission from Geoff Curry, 11 October 2021.
- Submission from Justin Goc, General Manager, Barilla Bay Seafoods, 11 October 2021.
- Submission from Robyn Lewis, owner of the Milford property, 11 October 2021.

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 The Committee recognises the importance of this project and its contribution toward realising the significant benefits of the South East Traffic Solution. However, the Committee holds concerns regarding some matters that are yet to be resolved.
- 6.2 The Committee notes the importance of suitable access to the Milford property for emergency response, which is critical to protecting the infrastructure and operations of the Hobart International Airport. The Committee urges the Department of State Growth to find a suitable access resolution that meets the airport's emergency response needs.
- 6.3 The Committee understands the new road alignment may result in the private Barilla Bay Seafoods signage becoming ineffective for alerting and attracting visitors to the business. The Committee recommends the Department of State Growth pursue the commitment made at the Public Works Committee hearing to investigate this matter further in consultation with Mr Goc and endeavour to reach a solution that is satisfactory to both parties.
- 6.4 The Committee also recognises that suitable access to Milford needs to be provided for the property owner, Ms Lewis, and other parties, such as TasWater. Such an arrangement should be negotiated in line with current legislation, standards and guidelines. The Committee suggests an outcome should be negotiated which recognises the impacts of the project on the viability and use of the property, and which meets the needs of the Department, the Milford property and Ms Lewis, and other parties requiring access.
- 6.5 The Committee has considered the potential impacts on the Milford Forest habitat, and the threatened orchid species endemic to this habitat. The Committee recognises the significance of this habitat, and the public value in retaining this for future generations. The Committee notes that these impacts are subject to assessment under EPBC legislation and by other bodies over which the Committee has no jurisdiction. However, it strongly urges the Department to have robust and enforceable mechanisms in place to ensure construction management and ongoing weed management plans to prevent any accidental damage, by machinery or other means, occurring to the threatened orchid species in question. The Committee notes that any matters raised, or conditions imposed through the EPBC assessment process, such as those pertaining to construction and environmental management plans and ongoing weed management, should obviously be closely monitored and adhered to.
- 6.6 Notwithstanding these matters, the Committee is satisfied the need for the proposed works has been established. The Committee has considered the evidence received and in line with its statutory obligations, is of the view that the project achieves its stated purpose, is necessary and provides public value.
- 6.7 The project is a key component of the South East Traffic Solution. Once completed, it should contribute toward providing a safer and more efficient road network for

the large and growing number of road users on the Tasman Highway in the south eastern region, by reducing congestion, improving travel times and reducing traffic accidents.

- 6.8 Accordingly, the Committee recommends the Tasman Highway-Hobart Airport to Midway Point Causeway project, at an estimated cost of \$28.7 million, in accordance with the documentation submitted.

**Parliament House
Hobart
30 November 2021**

**Hon Rob Valentine MLC
Chair**