THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART, ON THURSDAY 5 JUNE 2008.

LYELL HIGHWAY, GRANTON TO NEW NORFOLK - MURPHYS FLATS TO MOLESWORTH JUNCTION AND TARRANTS ROAD IN GRANTON TO LIME <u>KILN POINT</u>

<u>Mr TED ROSS</u>, SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER, DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE, ENERGY AND RESOURCES; AND <u>Mr JUAN LEE</u>, CONSULTANT, PITT & SHERRY WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

- **CHAIR** (Mr Harriss) Ted and Juan, welcome. The process is, as I think Shane explained to you on site, that we have received the formal submission. We appreciate, as always, the site visit. That process is always very informative. There is nothing like seeing on the ground what is intended. We would now invite you each, as you may have planned, to speak to the submission. It is appropriate for the process of the Parliament to have evidence on *Hansard* because that forms part of our process of further considering project and it helps in the production of our report. There will be parts of the Hansard process here which will form the report we formally put together in our consideration of the project.
- **Mr ROSS** I will open with a bit of background to the project. The Lyell Highway between Granton and New Norfolk is 14.25 kilometres of road. It is a category 2 road in the DIER hierarchy. Over the past decade the department has done a lot of work on the highway, which has included the upgrade of the Murphys Flat overtaking lanes, the Molesworth Road junction and the bumpy bits. This election commitment of \$40 million is to upgrade the remaining sections between Granton and New Norfolk. Project 1, which is already under way, consists of works that are generally contained within the road reserve, which is why it was not subject to the approval of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works. Projects 2 and 3 are what this report covers. Project 2 runs from the western end of the Murphys Flats overtaking lanes to the eastern end of the bumpy bits and then from the western end of the bumpy bits to Molesworth Road junction. The locality plan on page 2 of the report shows those two locations. On figure 1 you can see the two locations I have just mentioned. Project 3 is one continuous section, which runs from Granton through to Lime Kiln Point.

The project itself has run through a number of phases including the concept development, preliminary design, detailed design and construction. The concept development phase has assessed the road against Ausroad guidelines for road design. That phase identified that the width of the road is less than desirable for the type of traffic that now uses the road. Testing of the pavement revealed that it has insufficient strength to carry the anticipated traffic for the life of the road, which is 20 years. Also identified in the concept report were a number of crest curves, accesses and junctions where sight distance is below the Ausroads guidelines. The width of some of the junctions makes it difficult for larger vehicles to turn.

The project objectives, which are on the second page, overall are to create an understanding that the operating conditions recognise the significant engineering, cultural and heritage constraints that apply to this project. The specific objectives of the project are to create a road geometry that is appropriate for the speed environment, to consolidate and rationalise accesses and to improve safety.

The second phase was the preliminary design phase which included a collation of a lot of the background and environmental surveys; and consultation with landowners, public utility owners and the Derwent Valley Council. We are now in the detailed design phase, which will not proceed until the project has been approved.

Many of the project objectives are related to the safe operation of the road. In doing this we will conduct a road safety audit prior to the opening of the works to ensure that the safety objectives have been achieved.

There are some of the other issues that I would like to raise. I have already touched on the sight constraints in terms of there being significant engineering, cultural and heritage aspects. In terms of the location of the project, the highway follows the southern bank of the Derwent River and it is adjacent to high cliffs on one side and the river flats. As a result of that, the highway has a number of tight curves and sharp crests. The tight horizontal curves result in changes in the operating speed outside the recommended range. This makes the driving task more difficult and potentially hazardous. The crests, and to some extent the curves, restrict the sight distance both along the road and from the junction and accesses. The high and steep terrain on the upper side of the road is a significant challenge because of the large amount of earthworks that are required in order to widen on that side. It is also difficult to revegetate. On the other side the deep silts are very difficult to construct upon and are subject to settlement over a long time.

I would particularly like to highlight the traffic flow that the road is designed to and the 6 800 vehicles per day, of which 410 are trucks and 83 articulated vehicles. I also want to recognise the road crashes. There have been a significant number through projects 2 and 3, in particular 89 crashes in the period from March 2001 until November 2005.

The justification of the project is derived from the safety improvements and a reduction in the high maintenance costs and operational environment of the road. Some of the main ones that we have discussed in the section on 'Safety Benefits' is increasing the stopping and sight distance to the relevant standard of the areas; increasing the safe sight intersection distance for accesses; upgrading junctions; providing rock-fall protection in areas; sealing of accesses to provide better skid resistance and take off for vehicles; providing a wider pavement, which is the 3.5 metre lane with the 1.2 metre shoulder. This also provides additional safety for cyclists. There is also improved delineation on the edge lines, guideposts and pavement markers. We are putting in warning signs and removing roadside hazards. Where we are unable to remove the hazards, we will install a safety barrier to protect vehicles from hitting them. A big part of this project is to increase the strength of the pavement and in doing that increasing the life of the road, and at the same time taking out some of those irregularities in the pavement and making it smoother. There will also be improvements in the drainage. The sealed shoulders reduce edge breaks along those areas, which also reduces maintenance. I would like to give Juan an opportunity to go through and discuss some of the issues in terms of the design and also some of the landowner consultation issues.

Mr LEE - Basically we have consulted with all the landowners. We have had individual meetings with them all to understand their problems and feelings on the current road situation and to confirm what they are after and what they expect. This is an ongoing process and we still have land acquisitions to deal with in the finer details of that. We have worked out how much land we need to take in a rough capacity and now we have to tie it down with them in more detail. Some of those landowners have other extraneous issues that need to be sorted in that process.

Heritage, cultural and environmental issues have been all identified and permits have been sought to take or remove where needed.

In the report we have mentioned under 'Threatened Species' that there was rough spear grass from basically 3 300 through to 7 000. That is not quite correct. It is actually two types of spear grass: one type from 3 000-3 400 and the other type in the rest of those chainages. The other type, just for interest, is a knotty spear grass as opposed to rough.

- **Mr ROSS** There are a couple of other things in terms of some of the impacts on landowners. We have undertaken computer modelling along the entire length of the works and determined that there will be no significant increase in the noise.
- **Mr LEE** We weren't necessarily required to carry that out but some of the stakeholders had the perceived notion that there would be an increase in noise levels so we undertook noise level modelling just to allay their fears.
- Mr ROSS They were provided with copies of those reports.
- **Mr LEE** Those who mentioned it were given a copy of the report. It was also explained to them on site.
- **Mr ROSS** Further on another issue in terms of cyclists, part of the report identifies that cyclists who use the Lyell Highway currently occupy part of the traffic lane. Austroads recommends in a 100kph zone that bicycle widths are to be 3 metres maximum and 2.5 metres is desirable. Due to the geotechnical restrictions, high steep cuts and deep river silts provided, these widths are not feasible as part of this project. Widening of the road includes 1.2 metres of sealed shoulder and this, combined with the 3.5 metre lane, provides room for vehicles to manoeuvre around cyclists without having to cross the centre-line marking.

In terms of the timing of the projects, project 2 is the one on which we are spending most time at the moment in the detailed design. We are targeting to get the project into tender in August, for a construction date of October 2008 and completion in April 2009. The second project, project 3, will tender in June 2009 for construction between August 2009 and March 2010. Those time frames have been identified as the best time to construct on this highway because of the summer conditions and the longer days. That is why those time frames have been identified.

The cost estimates are quite detailed in the report and include contingencies.

- **Mr GREEN** On site we had a look at one area where the old lime kiln is situated. Can you explain to the committee why you can't significantly change the dynamics of that particular section of the road?
- **Mr ROSS** In terms of that section of the road we have identified, we are improving the horizontal alignment through that section. In terms of the vertical alignment, would you like to mention that, Juan?
- **Mr LEE** We could fix the vertical but it was seen by us as more beneficial to spend the money in other areas. The main problem with that lime kiln is the tightening of those two curves. We believe by fixing that we will significantly better that geometry without having to do the vertical alignment as well, which is then another step up in cost. The cost-benefit ratio doesn't quite balance for that.
- **Mr GREEN** Do the heritage issues associated with the lime kiln itself have an impact on what you can do on that section?
- **Mr LEE** They do. We have done a preliminary design for it and we think we can get around it by providing little walls so that the batter doesn't go back as far so we don't have as much impact on that lime kiln itself.
- **Mr ROSS** In terms of horizontal and vertical curves the horizontal curves are the biggest constraint in terms of improvement in safety, so we have identified that and improved it. The other thing we are doing through that section is we are still widening. That assists with safety in that in the vertical curve at least you have room to manoeuvre, which is more than they have currently at that location.
- **Mr LEE** All the horizontal and vertical curves are prioritised in the preliminary phase to determine which were the worst ones and we have tried to hit them in that order.
- **Mr GREEN** The other question, just to follow on from that, is with respect to the powerboat club on the right-hand side of the highway leading out to New Norfolk. Can you explain to the committee exactly what you will be doing on that section of the road and if it is possible to improve the access to the motorboat club during events?
- **Mr ROSS** Currently the access is on the Granton side of a crest. What the design aims to achieve is to lower that crest to improve sight distance and also to move the access to a point on the top of the crest so that they have maximum sight distance. Also at that location we are widening on the southern side so that there is sufficient room for vehicles to go around cars that are coming from Granton and propped to turn right into the motorboat club.
- **Mrs NAPIER** As I understand it, project 2 is about 4.11 kilometres of pavement and project 3 is about 3.65 kilometres, but the pavement costs on page 12 are \$1.2 million compared to pavement costs of \$348 000 on project 3. That seems to be a huge difference, given that there is only about a kilometre difference.
- **Mr LEE** On project 3 we will be widening the shoulders. We have done what is called the 'deflectograph' over it, which basically determines the strength of the pavement. The

pavement has been found to be borderline in project 3 but is probably okay for the next couple of years. During that time we will probably overlay it anyway which will help fix the structural integrity. Project 2 has been found to be very deficient. The pavement has been found to be fairly weak so we are going to put a granular overlay over the whole road, which increases the cost of that road.

- **Mrs NAPIER** Is the use of a granular overlay a better way to deal with it than digging up parts of the road and improving the base?
- **Mr LEE** Yes. By putting in a granular overlay you reduce the amount of time that the road is closed. Otherwise while the road is dug up the traffic has to be stopped. The sections you can do at one time are shorter.
- **Mr ROSS** In terms of the pavement materials in project 2, there is a significant amount past the motor yacht club and also on that Scottsdale orchard corner. Both those locations are going to have significant realignment works - horizontal and vertical. That requires additional pavement materials.
- Mrs NAPIER So that will be new pavement?
- **Mr ROSS** Yes, new pavement, which is included in that item. In project 3 the existing pavement is largely remaining as it is.
- **Mrs NAPIER** If you had to build a totally new pavement, what would it cost per kilometre for section 3? This is just for future reference. If you were trying to build a kilometre of road on that kind of area, predominantly new pavement, what would it be worth?
- **Mr ROSS** I wouldn't want to make an estimate. I could provide you with that information at a later time. It depends on a lot of different things. It depends on what sort of subgrade material you have, what you have to do, if you have to dig it up, if it is big slabs of asphalt.
- **Mr LEE** Not every road is the same; roads are of varying thickness, depending on what the existing ground is like. So the cost depends on the thickness.
- Mrs NAPIER What would your range be?
- **Mr LEE** I come from Townsville and the pavements up there are around 800 mm thick. The pavements we are putting here are around 400 mm. Building over rock you are probably looking at a minimum of 150 mm; building over soft, crappy stuff it could be anywhere up to 800 mm.
- **Mrs NAPIER** That is reasonable. On project 3, coming back to your comment about the pavement, you are saying that that is predominantly to account for the widening. Is that built into your forward maintenance program? Would you expect to have an overlay of that area?
- **Mr ROSS** In terms of the decision to provide just shoulders on that location, when you put shoulders in there is always a risk that you are going to have a differential settlement between those new shoulders and the new pavement. So through Granton, for example,

the way we are doing it is to widen the road and put the shoulders in on the edge. What maintenance has identified is that, in the future when we resurface the road, which is part of the general maintenance strategy, if you have slight settlement in those shoulders you will be able to overlay the whole with a new course.

Mrs NAPIER - Do it later on and let it settle first?

- **Mr ROSS** Yes, and to do it at a time which is more cost effective, which is when you are doing your normal maintenance.
- **Mrs NAPIER** We had quite a bit of discussion when we were looking at the project in relation to the fact that this has been identified as an important bicycle commuter link and recreational link. A number of studies have identified this area as being an area where that is important to do. Probably the most practical suggestion has been that it be done as part of the road design. With the bumpy bits that are currently being done, as I understand it, and are not part of this project -
- **Mr ROSS** The bumpy bits were completed about two years ago.
- Mrs NAPIER What kind of shoulders does that currently have?
- Mr ROSS That has a minimal shoulder. It just has a gravel verge.
- Mrs NAPIER Project 1 and we saw that being done currently what will that have on it?
- Mr ROSS That will have 1.2-metre shoulders.
- **Mrs NAPIER** Why it is not practical to move to at least a 2.5-metre bicycle width at the side to provide safety for the cyclists?
- **Mr ROSS** To move to a 2.5-metre wide lane would involve significant increases in excavation. You would have to acquire a lot of land off landowners; you would have to build on silts. The increase in costs would be significant and not achievable as part of this project.
- Mrs NAPIER Are you talking millions or hundreds of thousands?

Mr ROSS - Millions.

- **Mrs NAPIER** You are allowing for a 1.2 metre width on the road to accommodate cyclists and there was some discussion about whether it would be preferable to move to at least 1.8 metres, which would be consistent with an 80 kph zone.
- Mr ROSS I would have to confirm that, but yes.
- **Mrs NAPIER** There were certain sections where it looked as if that would be more feasible for example, where we stood near the pine trees and a number of other areas. Why wouldn't you provide 1.8 metres where you can, and in other areas where you have the buffer of the hills on the side, where you don't want to touch them and which might

otherwise destabilise the hillside, why wouldn't you allow 1.2 metres there but at least allow 1.8 metres where the land was available?

Mr ROSS - In some sections in order to have 1.2-metre shoulders we have had to install a concrete gutter drain. So instead of having our preference, which would be a 2-metre-wide table drain, which assists in catching debris and also drains the pavement, we have had to install a concrete drain. In some sections to achieve that 1.2 metres we have had to spend significant money and go away from our preferred table drain to a concrete drain. What we have tried to achieve on this project is to provide a consistent road environment, so all the way through from Granton to New Norfolk to provide 3.5-metre lanes and 1.2-metre shoulders. To widen in some sections would have made an inconsistent environment, required additional cost and had additional impact on landowners.

Mrs NAPIER - Have you had a discussion with Bicycle Tasmania?

- Mr ROSS In terms of the consultation with cyclists -
- Mrs NAPIER I notice they didn't come back to you.
- **Mr ROSS** They have yet to come back to us but we have given them an opportunity to comment. That is what we aim to achieve with all our stakeholders.
- **Mr LEE** There was a public display; there were letters sent out to everyone. Every stakeholder received a letter with a similar plan to the current plan in the report not quite the same but very similar. Everyone was rung who could be rung and everyone was e-mailed who could be e-mailed.
- **Mr ROSS** I think it is important to note that the community is quite happy with the project. They believe in the outcomes and they were involved. The Derwent Valley Council was heavily involved in prioritising these works and identifying what we are trying to achieve.
- **Mr LEE** Most people along the Lyell Highway are more concerned about the speeding and reckless driving and are happy to see works done. I haven't heard too many people mention the bicycles, except yourself and Tim.

Mrs NAPIER - It's probably because they don't ride bicycles.

Mr LEE - Probably so.

Mr GREEN - Ted is a bike rider.

Mr ROSS - Yes.

Mr GREEN - Do you ride along that road?

Mr ROSS - I would ride along that road if I were going that way, yes.

- **Mr HALL** Is the 3.5-metre lane consistent with what is on, say, the Bass Highway and the Federal highway system at the moment? Is that the width of their carriageways at the moment?
- Mr ROSS Yes.
- Mr HALL What is the existing one up there?
- Mr ROSS It is an existing 3.5-metre lane, but there is a gravel shoulder of varying widths.
- **Mr HALL** I was just trying to establish that the new lanes are still going to be the same width as what exists, apart from the 1.2 metres.
- Mr ROSS Yes.
- **Mr HALL** If there were applications for more subdivisions, what would be the department's view of any new accesses or would they have to have shared accesses with what is already there?
- **Mr ROSS** The whole road is limited access. That has been proclaimed so it's the department's view to restrict access onto the highway and try to get vehicles onto the highway through the same accesses. For accesses such as Molesworth Junction, the department has spent a lot of money on that infrastructure to try to get vehicles to enter at that location.
- Mr HALL I wanted to ask about the radiata pines that we looked at, the heritage listing on that.
- Mrs NAPIER The heritage pine cones?
- **Mr HALL** Yes, the heritage pine cones. I think you indicated that it is the one tree that is to be removed. I can appreciate the landowner wanting them left, but to my casual observation they are very old pines and getting towards the end of their useful life.
- **Mr ROSS** The way the department views those is that we will assess them as to whether they are a hazard within that clear zone. If they are not within that clear zone then there is no reason to remove them. As an ongoing maintenance strategy we regularly go through and remove trees.
- **Mr HALL** You have an arborist who will come along and say, 'I have considered that those are going to be a safety hazard'?
- **Mr LEE** We have already had an arborist look at those trees, and that is how we have determined that we can get rid of that first one but not the others.
- Mr ROSS In the future that will continue to happen. This project is just a snapshot.
- **Mr HALL** One advantage I did notice is that some of them are leaning away from the highway, so that's a start.

- **Mr GREEN** The line marking itself, the delineation between the shoulder and the road surface proper, will there be some consistency with respect to that into the future?
- **Mr ROSS** Yes. That will remain 3.5 metres. As we reseal it, for example, some of the other sections there will be aligned, so we will have 3.5-metre lanes and 1.2-metre shoulders.
- **Mr LEE** It will be audible wherever we can put it, as there are certain restrictions on proximity to houses. It will be audible line marking where it is far enough away from houses.
- Mr HALL It will all be 100 kph or do we have some 80 kph restrictions?
- **Mr ROSS** Currently the speed limit up to Lime Kiln is 80 kph and that will remain. We then have the series from there right through to the end of bumpy bits and that is 100 kph. There is then a section from the end of the bumpy bits through the Molesworth Road, which is currently zoned at 80 kph.
- **Mr HALL** On the way up I think Juan might have mentioned that there will be some electronic signage there. Would you like to explain where that will be and what it will indicate?
- **Mr ROSS** There is a section of road which is on the end of the bumpy bits.
- **Mr LEE** From the end of the bumpy bits to just before the motorboat yacht club we will have electronic signage up through there.
- **Mr ROSS** It's from the end of the overtaking lanes through towards the motor yacht club. There is a section of road there where there is a series of tight curves. I think the estimate to straighten that section of road, for example, was around \$6 million. It was identified as a lower benefit ratio there. In that section we will provide sight benching and increasing widths to provide increased safety. We are also looking at providing through that section electronic signage to further warn motorists if they are going too fast.
- **Mr HALL** Will that be the signage which has a camera on it and says, 'Too fast. Slow down'? Is that going to be the message?
- **Mr ROSS** I think the message we are looking at tells you the speed limit. What we don't want to do is have something where people can go past and it tells them they are going at 178 kph an hour because they then decide to see what they can get it to.
- Mr HALL So that will still be 100 kph, not 80?

Mr ROSS - That's right.

Mr HALL - If you thought it was still a safety concern, why wouldn't you just reduce the speed limit on that bit?

- **Mr ROSS** Our Traffic Engineering Branch would assess that and if they thought it required that they would do that.
- **Mr LEE** Normally all you would put would be the yellow recommended speed warning signs. The electronic signage would replace those and be those signs basically.
- **Mr HALL** I have seen some on the southern outlet in Launceston and it always seems to come up to me when I turn off the Bass Highway, 'Too fast'.
- Mr ROSS That is exactly the sign there.
- Mr LEE We thought we were going to be the first but they beat us.
- **Mrs NAPIER** You say in your submission that you have yet to have detailed discussion with the school bus operators.
- Mr LEE I have done that.
- **Mrs NAPIER** I was trying to pick up through the designs how you're catering for pull-offs for the buses.
- **Mr LEE** There are currently a few pull-offs along there, but I spoke to the bus drivers and they don't have any concerns at the moment. I believe that they don't have any pick-ups in this section.
- Mrs NAPIER So it's not really an issue.
- **Mr LEE** There is one couple who have requested it but their kids aren't yet school age and he keeps telling me that he wants to move anyway. The school bus service isn't prepared for us to spend money to put it in for one person.
- **Mr ROSS** That is something that is ongoing with the department. We assess where bus stops are required and we provide for those. We try not to formalise them too much because people do move. We try to put gravel ones in. The works we are doing here, providing a 1.2-metre shoulder and those sorts of things, provide improvements in terms of pull-offs.
- **Mrs NAPIER** On the Tea Tree Road, as I remember, there were quite a number of spots where school bus pull-overs were identified and there was reasonable space for them to get off the road. I can understand the difficulties in terms of some of the areas for finding that kind of space but is it likely then that we're going to have a bus sitting partway out in the lane when they're picking up kids?
- **Mr ROSS** No, I don't believe so. Some already exist. For example, at Molesworth junction there are some existing bus stops. All the way through Granton, where there is a lot of housing, there are many existing gravel areas on the verges where buses would be able to stop safely.
- **Mrs NAPIER** So you don't anticipate that that will be a difficulty?

Mr ROSS - No.

- **Mrs NAPIER** What do you intend to do about the batter rehabilitation? When I had a look at the budgeted breakdown and I thank you for the detail of that apart from the earthworks and the pavement establishment, landscaping seemed to come up as a fairly costly figure. On project 2, for example, there is \$700 000 identified for landscaping, a big percentage of which seems to be batter rehabilitation.
- **Mr LEE** Batter rehabilitation and you will see this happen with package 1 involves putting down topsoil over those cut faces and then applying a jute mat over the top of it, which is like a hessian sack, and then placing hydroseed which is a mix of seed and papier-mache and then placing little trees along the bench and placing little grass seedlings in the face. In doing so, what will happen is that all of that stuff should grow and it will hold it all together and stop erosion and hence stops rocks and stuff falling out onto the road. It is quite an expensive exercise to do all that.
- Mr ROSS But the benefit is there in terms of long-term maintenance.
- Mrs NAPIER Where does the hessian come from?
- Mr LEE It is called 'jute mat'. A lot of places provide it.
- **Mrs NAPIER** I was just interested because Nelson's used to do curtain material, but they also had some interesting environmental materials that they now provide. I think they do it in a polyester base, though. I just wonder whether the department is aware of some of the materials that they produce that are for environmental projects.
- **Mr LEE** There are a lot of different materials and a lot of different methods of doing this sort of thing. Jute is one of the cheaper and most proven methods. There are other more expensive methods where you get 100 mm-thick poly and it is joined in triangular shapes that you pin to the face and fill up with dirt. That is quite expensive. That is just one type but there are all sorts of things like that. There is woven stuff that looks like a spider web all jammed together.
- **Mrs NAPIER** I had no idea of the diversity of what Nelson's provide. I presume that you have a look at what they have because if you can use Tasmanian-produced materials it seems to be a plus.
- **Mr LEE** We have a consultant who tells us what he recommends for the particular situation and we run with that.
- **Mrs NAPIER** Can I recommend having a look at Nelson's to see what they are producing? They are a company that has struggled a bit lately and I think they probably have a better future with the environmental products than they have in curtains.
- **Mr LEE** Just on that, we are not allowed to specify named brands or companies. We can only specify generic product and then it is up to the contractor to find a product that suits. We can't say, 'We want this specific type of stuff from this specific place'.

- **Mr ROSS** If a contractor identifies that as an option, we are able to vary things. It is mainly up to the contractor who tenders for it to decide what sorts of materials they use and who their suppliers are.
- **Mrs NAPIER** I know they are being used a lot by the Victoria Ports Authority and at Newcastle in some of that redevelopment. I just wondered if they were being used at all in Tasmania. Probably not for this project.
- **CHAIR** I am looking at a copy of the Tasmanian Road Hierarchy Target Standards 1999. I will just give that to you, Ted, in case there has been an update of that. My first question goes to the matter of the sealed shoulder, given the lane width for a category 2 road. That recommendation in that document you're looking at suggests 1.5 metres and on this design you're providing 1.2 metres. Is there any inconsistency with that as your road category design criteria?
- **Mr ROSS** This document outlines targets and as part of this project we have tried to maximise the width that we have provided for motorists and in doing that we have been able to achieve 1.2 metres. A target here may be that it reads 1.5 metres and we are aiming for that target but we were only able to achieve 1.2 metres.
- CHAIR But in the process maximising the lane width for vehicles?

Mr ROSS - Yes.

- CHAIR We have had a submission from a Mrs Christine O'Halloran. She lives at 38 Atkins Road, which is off Rowbottoms Road. She has raised a number of matters about the junction of Rowbottoms Road, travelling in both directions, with regard to sight distances, slip lanes, right-turn lanes and so on. My study of the documentation suggests that all those issues have been taken account of in the design. I wonder if for sensible public relations you might consider contacting her and showing her the design. We can give you her contact details. I reiterate that my study of the design indicates that in Rowbottoms Road you are going to have a right-turn lane for traffic heading from New Norfolk. Then she raises matters in relation to Tarrants, Turners and Rowbottoms roads. Even with Tarrants and Turners roads, the design suggests that for traffic heading from New Norfolk there is an expanded access to the left of the main lane, so there is some safety account taken there as well. Am I right in my assessment of those three intersections? Would you like to address those matters with her? It was important to address those issues on the public record because I am satisfied that those are matters that have been taken account of. I now go to a matter that she raises in her submission and that is that she says in Rowbottoms Road currently there are no line markings to indicate where the road stops and the highway starts. I presume that would be part of the natural process of redesigning the road? That would be normal standard?
- Mr ROSS Yes, upgrading all the line marking.
- **CHAIR** What about street lighting at those intersections? Is there nothing being proposed there?

Mr LEE - No.

Mr GREEN - Would it be normal to have lighting at those sorts of interjections?

- Mr LEE They are technically classed as rural intersections, so no.
- **CHAIR** Bicycle Tasmania has indicated in its submission to us that it would satisfied, as I best recall, if there was a bicycle-friendly design with the highway. Have they had a chance to comment on the design?
- **Mr ROSS** Yes, we have given them an opportunity to comment on the design but if they would like to view it again or talk to us again, we are happy to do that.
- **CHAIR** Their submission to us was somewhat imprecise in that that was all they said, about a bicycle-friendly design.
- Mrs NAPIER They just wanted it to meet Australian road standards.
- **CHAIR** Yes. What is your view about the bicycle friendliness of this design? I know Mrs Napier has gone down the path of bicycle use.
- **Mr ROSS** Currently the road is 3.5-metre lanes with a gravel shoulder. What we will be doing as part of this works is provide an additional 1.2-metre shoulder, a 0.6-metre verge and also a friendly table drain. What we will be doing for cyclists is improving what they have now. Although it doesn't meet the full Austroad design standards, it is significantly better than what they have at the moment.
- **CHAIR** Has DIER made any assessment of the Lyell Highway between Granton and New Norfolk in terms of being an important cycleway? I am just looking again at the road hierarchy target standards, which suggest that shoulders on important cycleways need to have special consideration given to widths regardless of category. That is the reason for the question, Ted. Has DIER made any assessment of that highway as being an important cycleway?
- **Mr ROSS** As I have mentioned previously, what we have aimed to provide is a consistent road standard for all road users, and that includes taking cyclists into account. The road is designed to improve safety for everyone. Another example is that throughout the highway we are improving sight distance. A vehicle travelling along that road will be able to see the cyclist much sooner than at the moment.
- **CHAIR** I understand those issues that you have taken account of in regard to safety with this redesign, but has the department made any assessment of the highway as an important cycleway?
- **Mr GREEN** In other words, did you consult the cycling community on the importance of this particular road for cycling?
- **Mr ROSS** We wrote to the cyclists, as we wrote to other stakeholders, and gave everyone an opportunity to make comment. At this stage we have not received any comments from them. Based on the submission that you have from Bicycle Tasmania, I suggest that we will go back and have another discussion with them.

- **CHAIR** Again, going to the road hierarchy target standards, there are some words in there that make it very clear that important cycleways need to have special consideration. Who determines what is an important cycleway? The department? Or does a bicycle organisation come to you with a submission and then you determine the road as an important cycleway? Who makes that determination?
- Mr ROSS I will have to take that question on notice.
- **CHAIR** They are the words coming from the department's own document. I want to understand who determines what roads in this State are important cycleways.
- **Mrs NAPIER** And how that decision is made relative to the kinds of plans that have been done for bicycle access. For example, there was reference to one that had been done around New Norfolk, another that has been done of Hobart city and environs in terms of bike strategies. Are they documents that are then adopted by your department or do they tend to be documents that are done by local government and/or other reference groups and it is up to them to then really press those issues with the department and the relevant minister? It is a question of policy and mechanics.
- **Mr ROSS** I think it is outside what I can probably discuss with you here as to the bicycling strategy, who makes those decisions and what determines an important cycleway. I know, for example, in this project that we consulted with the Derwent Valley Council. We discussed the widths of the road with them and informed them that this was what we were providing. They made comments on cyclists as well, but at the end of the day they were happy with what we were providing for this project.
- **Mrs NAPIER** I guess it is understandable in the context of road safety and the importance of cars. As we discussed when we were out there, this is certainly going to be an improvement in the longer-term. We are unlikely to want to cut back into the batters at another time in order to put in cycleways. Then presumably there is the issue of saying that the forward plan could well be, for parts of the highway at least, that we might need to hang some pathways off the side, as I have seen done in some steep areas, though more often by local government than by State government. In other parts perhaps we could even look at access through private property. It is always the contentious issue of buying up even more property. One would think there would be a forward plan if a comprehensive assessment has been done of the fact that that is a really important cycling road.
- Mr ROSS It hasn't been brought to our attention that this is a significantly important cycleway.
- CHAIR But you will let us know the process for so determining that.
- **Mrs NAPIER** I think it's useful for the committee to know that so that we can assess any road in the context of its long-term development.
- CHAIR Has the department undertaken a safety audit of bicycle safety on that highway?
- Mr ROSS Not to my knowledge.

CHAIR - Could you check that please and advise us?

Mr ROSS - Yes.

CHAIR - Ted and Juan, thank you very much for your participation.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

Mr TIM MORRIS MP WAS CALLED AND EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Tim, welcome to the committee. We have formally received the department's documentation so you can have a copy to see what the design is.

Mr MORRIS - Thank you very much.

My history on this goes back quite a long way to my time on the council. DIER and the council were involved in a study called the Derwent Valley Strategic Planning Study 2001. It identified, as best as we knew at the time, all the issues for probably the next 25 to 30 years in relation to the Lyell Highway. There were issues from getting the surfaces sorted out - the bumpy bits - to getting the sight distances straightened out, and the accesses were all a problem. It has had a very bad history of serious accidents. We managed to identify all those and I think by and large the department has taken those on board very well.

However there is one area, which my submission specifically concerns, which is cycling. It appears to me, from all the documentation I have seen, that they have completely ignored the whole issue of cycling and cycling safety in relation to that road, or certainly have not taken it seriously. As we saw this morning, there really is no option of putting a separate cycle lane in from Granton to New Norfolk, even though New Norfolk has been included in the Bicycle Strategy for Southern Tasmania. Therefore the only option that we see as viable is to have cycling lanes along the side of the highway.

It seems that in the work that was done to smooth out the bumpy bits a couple of years back, there was no shoulder sealing, despite that being identified as a key issue. There was no provision of bicycle lanes whatsoever, so there was a lot of money spent but no improvement for safety for cyclists whatsoever on the road. In the work that is currently going on, again at the New Norfolk end in particular, it is patently obvious that again there is no consideration for cyclists.

As was told to us by DIER this morning, even where there is a sealed shoulder, cyclists do not like using it because it ends up with a fair bit of rubble and coarse material. The department contractors do not keep that area clean, so cyclists tend to be forced back onto the main lane of the road for a few reasons, including not wanting punctures and the like. We seem to have a situation where we have had this once-in-a-generation opportunity with a road upgrade to have incorporated the cycling infrastructure that had been identified a number of years back. We had an expectation, wearing my council hat from years ago, that cycling would be factored into this road in this upgrade. However, nothing I heard this morning from our tour would give me any confidence that anything whatsoever is being done. I do not know from the documentation whether cycling has even got a mention in relation to the department's planning. So I am extremely disappointed in what I am seeing

Yes, where there is a 1.2-metre wide shoulder, it will provide some opportunity for cyclists to be on the outside of the white line, but that will not be consistent along the road. The sections where they are not going to work, which are the bumpy bits which they are not going to go back over and the other bits that they will not be touching, will not have a sealed shoulder. So even though they have said there will be a sealed shoulder provided from Granton to New Norfolk, that in fact is not going to happen. It is going to happen only in parts and inconsistently. I am looking again at the section they have just done at the New

Norfolk end. There will be places there where there will not even be a 1.2-metre shoulder, so we would be lucky to get 600 millimetres in a couple of places.

It is rather disappointing that that is not going to be dealt with because our next opportunity probably will be 20 years away, unless specific works are undertaken to have cycling included. I think it is interesting that it is World Environment Day today. Climate change and how we are dealing with that has been on the agenda solidly for the last year and yet that message does not seem to be getting through to the department loudly and clearly.

The other thing that I very much worry about in the way that the works are being done is that they seem to be driven by an amount of money being pulled out of the air as an election commitment, and then that is the amount of money that has to do the work. Some \$14 million worth of work is done, and everything else will have to fit around that. This is not being done from an engineering point of view about what is an appropriate safe road, then coming back and assessing how much money that will cost or whether it is even necessary to spend the \$14 million. We saw the massive earthworks that are going on there today; I believe that that is serious overkill for what is needed on that highway. Yes, it needs a better road surface and better sight distances, but they could have perhaps de-engineered that quite a lot, perhaps moved the 80kph zone 200 metres further up the road and saved a whole lot of money. At most it would have cost 10 seconds in driving time. It is the Government's call on what it does and it is disappointing that we are not getting the best result that I believe we can out of this highway.

I am happy that the work to upgrade the highway is being done. I just think that we could potentially have had a better outcome for a greater range of road users. We will be fighting uphill to get safe cycling conditions along that road in line with the strategy that has been identified by the councils in the southern region.

- **Mrs NAPIER** You made comment in relation to the significant work that was being done on the batter near section 1 that is currently underway. Part of the reason for the size of that batter work is that the road can be expanded to allow for the 1.2 metres as well as the 3.5 metres. We have been advised that we would be talking about millions to increase the width of that bicycle pathway, particularly where it is close to the batters, given that if you tackle an existing batter then you have to cut back significantly in earthworks, and that is worth millions, what budget would you put as being acceptable to develop such a bike pathway along that road?
- Mr GREEN Given heritage issues, like the lime kiln, Aboriginal middens, and other things.
- **Mr BOOTH** My approach would be one where perhaps the slowing of the traffic to 80 kilometres per hour for the entire section of the road, with the exception of the overtaking lanes, would allow us to reduce the sight distances a little so we could still keep the road more on the alignment that it is now, instead of having to try to cut those corners to the degree they are that are causing the really big earthworks. So you would come back to a softer road, perhaps, in a sense of if it was slightly slower you would not need to get the extra sight distances in and we could get that extra width on the road without having to cut back into the bank so far.

By the look of it, the work that they are doing at the moment will actually enable them to shift the road across some 6 or 7 metres quite substantially, whereas I do not think that is necessary

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to do that so far. But that is as much about improving sight distances for a 100kph road as it is about getting extra width to put the sealed shoulders on because they will be moving the road across inland, into that bank a bit, as part of this process.

Because the bike lanes themselves are not going to carry any weight, apart from when they are also used for cars if they need to pull off to the side of the road, I do not believe they need to have the degree of compaction that you would expect for carrying trucks and all the heavy vehicles. So where you are coming out onto fill over the soft area of the flood plain, it just may be possible to encroach onto that flood plain a little at a road that is not so densely compacted underneath. We have already got sections of that road that are having to go across the mud and the flood plain; we know that it is going to compact and it will have to be rebuilt over time. It just seems to me that there is that opportunity for them to do a softer road, perhaps slow the speed limit down a bit, and have it more compatible for cyclists, without going to the degree they have. But they have done that work now so we are stuck. I really do not think that we need to spend a lot more money, if any more at all. I think the budget allocation that is there should be sufficient.

- **Mrs NAPIER** We did pursue the issue of what would be required to try to get 1.8 metres, which is appropriate for an 80kph zone and the feedback we had was that it would cost considerable additional millions because of the need to cut into those batters that are not being touched.
- **Mr MORRIS** We are arguing with engineers here; I am not an engineer so all I can do is create my impression, but ultimately they are the engineers and they are the ones who have to build the roads to the standards. I guess we take a bit of a disagreement on the approach overall to the road construction.

CHAIR - Thanks, Tim.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.