

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET AT THE TOWN HALL, ST MARYS ON WEDNESDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2005.

ESK MAIN ROAD KILLYMOON BRIDGE ROAD REINSTATEMENT

Mr GUNADASA GINNELIYA, PROJECT MANAGER, DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE, ENERGY AND RESOURCES; **Mr BRIAN WILLIAMS**, PROJECT MANAGER, PITT AND SHERRY DESIGN; AND **Mr MICHAEL POLLINGTON**, ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER, PITT AND SHERRY WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Harriss) - Gentlemen, we might launch straight into hearing your submission.

Mr GINNELIYA - We want to give a presentation today and I will give a bit of background on the project, followed by our design engineer, Brian Williams from Pitt and Sherry, who will give more details of the design. That is the format we will try to follow. I will begin with the background and he will go into the details.

The history of this project goes back to the period 1997-98. At that time the department consulted with the minister to do a planning study of the Esk corridor because the Esk Main Road being a major link between the Midland and Tasman highways there was the need for the department at that time to assess its requirement for the future transport road in this area. As part of that study the engineers did an assessment in terms of social, economic and environmental issues. They looked at the condition of the pavement at that time - the deficiencies; how it can be improved - then looked at those scenarios in terms of freight and other social and economic issues and then come up with a strategy for the future, a 10 to 20-year period. At that time they also required surveys, they looked at risk factors and they looked at the main issues that needed to be considered and at the end of that study they came up with a set of 15 projects which were identified. I have a copy of the planning study that was done at that time. It identified 15 major projects which have to be dealt with from that time.

As part of that study they also did an economic benefit/cost benefit analysis and ranked the priorities which should be implemented. Some of those projects have already been implemented. When you were driving on the road you must have seen that the junction with the highway has been upgraded and you must have seen the wide shoulders and the edge lines and the new seal. That is part of those 15 projects and this became the next one to be included. In addition to that we realised that the existing pavement condition of this part of the project is in very poor shape and it needs immediate attention. The economic infrastructure fund our minister delivered in the last Budget, which was about \$18 million over the next three years, included as part of this package so the funding for this one came from the economic infrastructure fund and it is about \$2.5 million to do about 2.5 kilometres of road. The figure we have given in the report is \$2.7 million so

there is a minor shortfall but we will be able to manage with the State fund to meet that shortfall.

The next stage of the continuation of the Esk Main Road development will be to do a further widening and improvement between Avoca and Fingal. It is about 15 kilometres. We have just started the design and that is the main part of that assessed by the planning study and myself for the project. We have earmarked about \$7.5 million for that project. What I am saying is that it is a continuation of the Esk Main Road development for a period of time.

Because we had extensive public consultation at the time of the planning study we did not feel that there was a need to have further community consultation but we have prepared a flyer to be given to the community. As soon as this process is completed we will be distributing this leaflet to the community organisations and various interested groups, schools et cetera, describing what we are planning to do with this project and providing the basics of what we are trying to achieve, what has been done and how we initiated the project.

As we explained, the major improvements are to improve safety, to improve quality by providing better pavement - greater strength of the pavement - and to improve sight distance of the accesses. In addition to that, our main budget will reduce. There will be a major improvement to our budget as well. Those are the major things we are trying to achieve by doing this project. The other will be minor: road acquisition on the northern side - a 10 to 20-metre strip. We have had discussions with landowners for the land acquisition. Notice to treat was served on 21 January and so far no issues have been raised, so will assume that within the 30-day period, which is 22 February, the land will be vested in the crown's authority and we will not have any major issues in terms of land. I will hand over to Brian to give you a more detailed description of the project.

Mr WILLIAMS - The department has classified this section of Esk Main Road from Fingal to St Marys as a category 2 or reasonable freight road. They consider it to be an important road for freight. One of the reasons it has that classification is that there is no alternative for heavy freight from the section from Fingal towards the Midland Highway for rail as well so the classification changes. That category 2 classification has some implications for design about what speed and width you should adopt and the project design has been prepared on that basis.

I will give a quick summary of the existing road. As we saw on the site inspection, the pavement is deteriorating quite quickly and is this mainly due to the thinness of the pavement and the poorer quality of the pavement materials. They are just not strong enough to carry the heavy loads. As Guna also mentioned, that is pushing the maintenance expenditure up and that is fairly undesirable from the long-term point of view. We have done a fair bit of investigation into what the pavement is like there. There are quite a few holes in the pavement and there is quite a bit of testing to assist us in preparing an appropriate design. The design standard in terms of how fast you can travel, say, is also a fair bit below that pertaining for a category 2 road. The total for a category 2 road is 100 kilometres an hour design speed. On a couple of those crests you can see appropriately from about 40 kilometres an hour, so they are really quite tight. The horizontal alignment is not too bad, but it is the vertical; you can't really see far enough over the crest. The project addresses those issues.

The width of the road is also deficient. It has just under 6 metres in width and the shoulders - what there are of them - are unsealed and in some places are almost non-existent. So you have very little margin for error and there are a few instances where trees and other things that are hazardous are too close to the sealed part as well, so the overall width aspect is a problem. In the report there is a photo which shows some of the deteriorated pavement; there is also a photo in the body of the report showing what we are trying to achieve, which has taken nearly all the section that has been upgraded recently. That is the same width as we are trying to achieve here.

The proposed works are to strengthen the road, generally by placing a gravel overlay over the existing the road, except for some minor patching that we need to do first, where there are dips in the seal and if we put the gravel on top of that it could form ponds of water and that will soften the new gravel. So we are going to deal with those first. Widening the road on the northern side will provide a one-metre shoulders, so we effectively widen two metres on the northern side from the bridge through to this end of the job. Improvements to sight distance will be done by two main cuttings, one at about 1.6 kilometres from the bridge and one just east of Killymoon gates which we saw this morning - that is at 2.2 kilometres from the bridge. There are also some minor dips in the road if you drive it you can see little dips - and we will take them out as well by filling. So there are only two simple little cuts and the rest we will do by lifting it. That puts additional paving material on top and strengthens the road further and it also probably has less interruption to traffic while it is being done. Cutting is fairly inconvenient to traffic. If you have to pull a whole road out, lower it and then build the pavement layers back up there is a fair impact on the traffic flow during the construction, whereas filling is much easier. With pavement laying they can drive on it straightaway and it is not much of a hassle.

The widening requires the extension of three small box culverts. A couple of them are very small bridges, so they will be extensions with precast elements - two of them precast and one cast in situ. There will be a safety barrier put on each of those culverts as well. The safety barrier is deficient at the moment and we are going to put a safety barrier on both approaches to Killymoon Bridge. So there is actually a little bit of work on the western side of the bridge to try to prevent people from driving into the Break O'Day River.

Two landowners are affected by the proposal, although it is in three titles. We have had fairly extensive discussions with those landowners about their fencing, access and those sort of issues. They have seven accesses altogether and they will all be retained. A couple will be moved slightly to places where we can provide adequate sight distance for a traffic speed of 100 kph. Currently there are a couple where you can't see adequately coming out of them, so they will be moved. That will be when the new gates are redone and that sort of thing. As Gunadasa said, the landowners are fairly accepting of that acquisition and do not have any issues at all.

On the cost of the project, as Gunadasa said, we are slightly over \$2.5 million. As you would see in the submission we have an estimate there which includes a contingency of \$242 000 to allow for things that crop up in design. That estimate was prepared on the preliminary design. When we get the final design finished there will be some

refinements of that \$242 000. Hopefully it will allow for changes in contractors' rates, which are fairly unpredictable at the moment.

CHAIR - Okay, thanks Brian.

Mr POLLINGTON - As indicated, environmental assessments were done as part of the planning study. For this particular job we have had site-specific Aboriginal heritage, cultural heritage and vegetation and fauna habitat assessments done. There is no Aboriginal heritage site recorded in the area. There are no places included on the National Heritage list or Commonwealth lists, but Killymoon is listed permanently on the Tasmanian Heritage Register, as indicated before, and it is also listed in the Break O'Day planning scheme - schedule 14, I think it is, in the planning scheme.

They are the only heritage-listed places but there are other features to be considered of heritage value that were identified in the study. These include the concrete mile posts curved sandstone abutments on a small bridge, distinctive gates of Killymoon, there are the remnants of a former culvert which was constructed of local stone, and there are roadside plantings, as we have discussed, of hawthorn. In terms of botanical values there is a remnant fringe with several isolated black gums - eucalyptus ovata trees. That community is considered to be inadequately reserved in Tasmania and is considered to be endangered. It is also a potential food source for the swift parrot, which is a nationally endangered species. In terms of non-native vegetation, as is I think obvious, there are quite a number of declared weeds - gorse, blackberry and willow - that occur. There are three environmental weeds - hawthorn, briar rose and ivy - that have been identified in the area. In terms of zoological or faunal values, the eucalyptus ovata is a potential food source for the swift parrot. The hawthorn are also a source of food for the green rosellas, as we mentioned on site.

In terms of impacts and management, water quality is always a potential problem and the planning includes appropriate sedimentation controls and so forth so there will be no impact on water quality. In terms of the botanical values, the remnant fringe of the eucalyptus ovata - that is the row of 20 trees that we pointed out to you on site - are just outside the area of proposed works but they will be protected by appropriate environmental fencing during construction so that they are not damaged. There will be four isolated, individual black gums within the area that will be removed. They constitute a safety risk because they will be too close to the roadside. Their removal has been discussed with the Threatened Species Unit and that removal is acceptable because they are outside the habitat and core breeding area of the swift parrot - and the safety issue is recognised. Those are the botanical values.

The non-native vegetation we touched on before and that relates to the hawthorns. They are regarded as environmental weeds but they have been identified as part of the cultural heritage by the Heritage Council and, as mentioned, they provide a source of feed for rosellas. They are identified as weeds within the Break O'Day planning scheme so there is a conflict of interest, as indicated earlier, between the Heritage Council and the Break O'Day planning scheme and that is being currently discussed and some sort of compromise solution is being worked out between the department and those bodies with regard to that issue.

The removal of the black gums is not expected to have any significant impact on the swift parrots; that was discussed with the Threatened Species Unit. There will be no significant impact on Aboriginal heritage values because there are no sites identified but the usual protocols will be followed. If anything is found, work in that area will stop immediately and the matter will be referred to TALC and the Aboriginal heritage officer in the department for discussion as to what is to be done.

With regard to the historic heritage values, I have already mentioned the cultural heritage values of the hawthorns. The gates to Killymoon are not going to be affected, as we discussed on the site. Movement and widening of the cattle grid will be done in such a way that it will not impinge upon the gates. In fact, it will help preserve the gates and that has been discussed with the Heritage Council. Concrete mile posts are mentioned in point 1.4, I think. They will be replaced back at an appropriate spot after completion of the works. There is a stone bridge abutment on Millstream Creek. Those abutments can't be preserved. The original idea was that they might be able to be incorporated in the widened bridge but they can't be preserved for engineering purposes so, in view of that, we have had an extant study of those abutments done and that report has been lodged with the Heritage Council so that is all recorded and that one in agreement with the Heritage Council. The stone culvert and the old road formation referred to earlier is right at the eastern end of the project and won't be impinged upon by the construction. Probably the only other things that need to be mentioned are the usual things spot on in construction. All areas will be rehabilitated and waste disposal will be in accordance with Break O'Day Council requirements.

Mr STURGES - I have a quick question and I preface it by claiming to have no knowledge at all of engineering for building roads. Brian, my question is directed to you initially. You mentioned that you are going to overlay most of the surface with gravel and then build the new road on top of the gravel. Given that we have some substructure problems with the existing road, do you anticipate that in the short to medium term there is going to be cracking or problems with the road as we have now? I don't understand the engineering basis of the decision but I am concerned that if we are just going to put gravel on top of the existing road and spend \$2.5 million, we are going to have the same problem.

Mr WILLIAMS - Basically how the road structure works is you have a road pavement, say, of a given thickness, you apply a load from the wheel at a point on the top of the layer and the layer spreads, so at the bottom it is more distributed, there is more supporting it, so the higher up you are above the weaker materials the more the load is spread and the less the pressure is on the weaker materials. So the weaker the ground you are putting a road over, the thicker the road pavement has to be. We have worked out how strong it is now and how much additional strength the overlay will be and we are convinced that that will provide sufficient strength to carry the anticipated loads for the next 20 years.

Mr BEST - You mentioned 15 major projects in relation to a Gutteridge Haskins and Davey report. From your explanations, this would be the third project, is that right?

Mr GINNELIYA - It is the third major project.

Mr BEST - Right. Obviously the criteria is from that report, is that what you have adopted? I haven't seen the report so I am assuming - I know you said you have it here and thank

you very much for that - this is the third priority in relation to that report, so this is part of a strategy for this section of road?

Mr GINNELIYA - Yes.

Mr BEST - We are talking roughly of something like 70 kilometres from the highway to St Marys. Regarding the other two upgrades, there are a couple of newer sections that you passed, a few big sweeping curves and also, I think, from the highway to Avoca that has been upgraded too not so long ago so that is all part of this?

Mr GINNELIYA - The very first bit done I am not sure is part of that - it happened a bit earlier - but the upgrading of the junction with the highway is following this study -

Mr BEST - On that railway line section, I suppose.

Mr GINNELIYA - and then the section after Avoca, between Avoca and Ormley, the wide shoulder, that was after the study. This is the third one. The fourth one will be from Ormley, about 15 kilometres. We have some \$500 000 to spend but it may not be extensive for this project because with this project we have \$2.5 million for 2.5 kilometres and that is about \$1 million a kilometre. For the other section we have \$500 000 a kilometre, so we may cut down the amount of work we can do in that.

Mr BEST - But you mention an \$18 million package that has been set aside - that was from the overall start, was it?

Mr GINNELIYA - Yes. That \$18 million package was for the entire State.

Mr BEST - Right, for the entire State, so this is your bite of that amount.

Mr GINNELIYA - Yes, we got a bite of that.

Mr BEST - The other part of it is the speed category 2 and economic based on freight et cetera. The speed limitation is 100 kph - I think Brian was talking about that - and that is going to remain. I am assuming, say, when you get all of the 15 projects completed that it would never become a 110 kph road, would it?

Mr GINNELIYA - No, I don't think so.

Mr BEST - Because you would have to have wider verges.

Mr GINNELIYA - Yes, it is impossible to get it to 110 kilometres because we have 110 kilometres I think out to the airport, on the Midland Highway and the Bass Highway. We have wide median strips, we have wide shoulders, wide lanes and two lanes. It is impossible to achieve a category 1 for this road - it is category 2 and 3, so you would never achieve the standard for 110 kph.

Mr BEST - So depending upon what money is set aside for these remaining projects - I mean, obviously you don't really know the end time - but you would have some rough time frame that you would be thinking about?

Mr GINNELIYA - No, I would not be able to give that.

Mr BEST - Because something could be more important in the fourth one on your list somewhere else or -

Mr GINNELIYA - What happens is that all these projects are clawed into our forward program and priorities can change within the next two years. We may need money for somewhere else, so these plans would go on the backburner. That kind of thing can happen within the forward program.

Mr BEST - Sure. But the consultation that you have had in relation to this project has been very good by the sound of it - you haven't got a lot of people out there wanting to come in and tell us things they want to change. That has been the past experience, so from that point of view it is pretty good. In a sense, it seems that the local punters here are pretty happy with the way that you are proceeding with it and so forth. Can I just keep going?

CHAIR - Certainly, by all means.

Mr BEST - Reduced high maintenance costs - it is pretty evident when you look at the road that you have quite a lot of maintenance. What do you expect to save?

Mr GINNELIYA - Roughly for the cost of routine maintenance, which we will continue to have, such as cutting grass and clearing table drains et cetera, I reckon about \$5 000 per kilometre per year. Then we come to the pavement maintenance, which I have talked about. We can save on clearing, patching, sealing of edges, levelling of edges, shoulders, et cetera. That will be about \$8 000 to \$10 000 per kilometre for a year or so.

Mr BEST - So it is quite substantial -

Mr GINNELIYA - This is an amount for a year and it can go up depending on how many patches we have. As you can see, there are many factors here because as those cracks peel open we would go back and patch them and that costs a lot of money. It is a major component.

Mr BEST - Mr Sturges mentioned that obviously we don't want any more maintenance - none of us do - and we want to see it reduced, so there will be some lifting then of the vertical alignment. How does that match with your bridge? How do you blend that?

Mr WILLIAMS - At Killymoon?

Mr BEST - Yes, you have to raise -

Mr WILLIAMS - You can't raise Killymoon Bridge.

Mr BEST - No, but what do you -

Mr WILLIAMS - Right at the bridge we actually change from a granular overlay over about the last 35 or 40 metres and go into a thick asphalt layer so we bring it down and cut it in so we don't cut in any more than we have to. So we get quite a thick - 135 mm thick, I think - asphalt layer which is very thick and strong.

Mr BEST - And just on the environmental stuff you talked about hopefully getting something negotiated - there are a couple of different views on that - it is not really the age of the hawthorn trees is it, it is the fact that they are there, I suppose. We did talk about that earlier but -

Mr POLLINGTON - Yes.

Mr BEST - So you could core sample or obviously could get someone in to tell you the age, but it is the fact that they are there.

Mr POLLINGTON - It is not age. The Heritage Council regard them as part of the cultural heritage but of course there is no legislation to protect cultural landscapes in Tasmania.

Mr BEST - You have this flyer that you're going to send out. Is that going to residents?

Mr GINNELIYA - Yes, to industry associations, schools, bus operators, the RACT and so on.

Mr BEST - I have two final comments. I am very pleased that you have laid the costs out in the way you have. Often we're told that we cannot have these sorts of costs because it will give too much information to potential contractors, but thank you very much for doing that because it does help us to look at how your cost structure sits.

Finally, you have 'authorised' inside the front cover, would that be Pitt and Sherry or the department that has stamped that authorisation?

Mr WILLIAMS - Pitt and Sherry.

Mr STURGES - I too also thank you for the way you have laid out your estimated costs table. Going to table 2, you have an amount of \$142 000 set aside for traffic facilities. Could you very briefly explain to me what that means, please?

Mr WILLIAMS - Traffic facilities include paint on the road, reflective pavement markers, safety barriers, signs, guideposts.

CHAIR - Can I come back to this matter of the hawthorns and their contribution to the cultural landscape. Michael, as you have pointed out, there is no legislative protection for that. What appears to be the compromise between the Break O'Day Council and the Heritage Council? Where does that sit at the moment?

Mr POLLINGTON - It would probably be best if I deflect that to Guna because he has been doing the negotiating.

Mr GINNELIYA - As far as the department is concerned I can indicate that transplanting hawthorn hedges at the new fence or going without doesn't really matter to the department. We want to get the work done but we are sitting as a mediator between the Heritage Council and the Break O'Day Council. The council insisted that if we transplant the hawthorn hedges then they should be 100 metres away. They won't let you plant along the edge of the road because the council is trying to enhance the vista of the

area - an open landscape for seeing hills and mountains far away. The Heritage Council said, 'No, we have a line of hawthorn hedges that give a cultural perspective'. So these are conflicting arguments in the equation, with me in between trying to mediate a compromise. Nobody wants to back down. The council said, 'As long as it is hawthorn we don't want it'. In the latest discussion we had with the Heritage Council they asked if there were a different type of hedge which is less invasive. It will do the job for us but the Break O'Day Council is concerned whether it is acceptable. That is where it stands at the moment, trying to find those native species which are less invasive and, at the same time, give some cultural effect.

CHAIR - But surely, from where I sit, if there is no legislative authority resting with the Heritage Council to require what they think is a good thing, then in the end couldn't you tell the Heritage Council to go take a jump? They have no legislative authority to proceed down their path.

Mr GINNELIYA - I understand that the Heritage Council have some powers to issue an injunction to stop if they feel that they are aggrieved on certain issues. Is that true, Brian?

Mr WILLIAMS - They could classify all the hedges on Esk Main Road. It is a strong step. But certainly Break O'Day Council's view when they considered the development application was that the Heritage Council didn't have any control at all.

CHAIR - But from the evidence we have heard today there is no legislation addressing cultural landscape. Is the Heritage Council then taking it a step further and saying, 'These hawthorn hedges have cultural heritage significance' - not landscape significance? That is hardly the case because nobody has been able to identify the age of the hawthorns, so where is the heritage value in them, one could argue?

Mr POLLINGTON - Yes. I tend to agree with you. You start off with no cultural landscape legislation, so there is no way of protecting them, but there are people who feel strongly about cultural landscapes. From there, nobody has done anything to identify cultural landscapes of value in the State. If I say, 'Oh, that cultural landscape is of heritage significance', I am just expressing a personal opinion because we don't have any agreed formality and nobody has studied landscapes and said, 'This sort of landscape should be preserved'. You would have to do a lot of work before you could even set up some legislation to protect it. So in a sense I suppose the Heritage Council is looking down the road to the future, if you like, in the hope that landscapes might well be preserved. That is a personal opinion.

CHAIR - That may be their desire, but if there is no legislative backing, if push comes to shove, then you could ignore them, if that's what you wanted to do?

Mr POLLINGTON - Yes.

CHAIR - Is that an issue that the department might wish to take into consideration?

Mr GINNELIYA - I had a talk to Brian Inches yesterday and I asked him what his stand was. He said, 'If you can find a compromise for a different type of hedge, which is not banned in New Zealand, we would be prepared to accept it'. But he indicated that I

would have to make a submission to a planning appeal tribunal. It is a long process. Even if we find a compromise solution, we have to make an appeal and go back to the appeal tribunal.

CHAIR - I don't want to labour the point too much because the department can handle this, I am sure, and you will. But in the absence of any head of power to move in this direction, if you simply wanted to be in concert with the Break O'Day Council and I presume maybe even the landowners, you could rip those hawthorns out as part of the reconstruction of this road corridor and leave it at that, couldn't you, as a department and the owner of the road?

Mr GINNELIYA - Yes, we could. My advice is that I should consult further and get all the people to a round table if possible and try to find a compromise.

CHAIR - By all means consult and compromise.

Mr GINNELIYA - Yes. But at the end of the day what you say is possible.

CHAIR - Is that a matter that you think might be the end result? If the Heritage Council does not come to the party and decides that it has some authority here, but it is clearly proven that it doesn't, and the landowners are not interested in a hedge bordering their property, would the department then consider proceeding?

Mr GINNELIYA - Yes. We have to spend our money. There is no way we cannot do the project.

CHAIR - I just think it is such an impractical proposition to replant such a difficult weed. It is like requiring somebody to play around and replant blackberries. Who is going to want to participate in a project such as that? Anyway, I think the point has been made. I have become frustrated with other projects when weeds have been identified as having some significance. Then all sorts of authority is sought to be imposed on the constructing authority, the DIER, and I see that as unreasonable. I see it as potentially costly. Let us just get on with the job. I think I have made the point there.

Mr BEST - I think you may have covered this point, but what did the landowners say they wanted?

Mr GINNELIYA - They don't care. They take it as a weed.

Mr BEST - Whatever happens, they don't mind so long as they get a new fence.

Mr GINNELIYA - Yes.

CHAIR - When we were at the Killymoon gates I looked back to the west at what must have been the Millstream Creek Bridge and it seemed reasonably narrow. Is that bridge going to be replaced? You mentioned something earlier about the abutments to it. Is that going to be replaced with culverts?

Mr WILLIAMS - Widened.

CHAIR - It is going to be widened?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes. I think that one is at a culvert and it has a flow in it as well and we are going to attach the extension to it.

CHAIR - Just finally with regard the black gum, the four which will be removed, which are in the clear zone, what is the measurement from, say, the centre of the road or from the edge of the road which you are determining as the clear zone? Again, this matter of trees in road reserves is controversial because of compromising safety for road users. So for those particular ones, what is this clear zone that you have identified in the report? Does it have a measurement?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, it does. A clear zone varies with speed and also it varies with the alignment. If you are on the outside of a kerb it is slightly wider but on a road like this it is about eight metres I think from the nearest edge of the running lane. So on the Midland Highway, where there is more traffic and the speed is higher, it is bigger.

CHAIR - Thank you. Any further questions? Anything further that any of your delegation wish to put to the committee before we deliberate on the matter?

Mr POLLINGTON - Can I pass on a couple of more comments about the hawthorns?

Laughter.

CHAIR - I think it is important, Michael. It is a controversial matter for this particular project but it could well arise in the future for us.

Mr POLLINGTON - I think there is a dangerous precedent for other areas if the cultural landscape is preserved at the behest of the THC in this case. If you talk about cultural landscapes, things like blackberries and willows are prominent parts of cultural landscapes. In this State we are ripping out willows, so for some people that is removal of a prominent part of a cultural landscape, and blackberries are an important part of our cultural landscape. Those things have to be kept in the back of your mind.

The other thing is that a sterile hawthorn has been identified, but it is pink not white. There is the possibility of using something like that although some people question whether replacing a white hawthorn with a pink variety is going to preserve that landscape or change things too much.

Mr BEST - It is very subjective, isn't it?

Mr POLLINGTON - Yes.

Mr BEST - It is a bit like architecture; what someone thinks is ugly but then in 10 years' time it isn't, so we end up with a situation where everything just stays as it is.

Mr POLLINGTON - Yes.

Mr BEST - Apart from the other issues that you are saying in relation to blackberries, willows and other things.

Mr POLLINGTON - Yes. Gorse is another one and it is a very prominent part of some of our landscapes. It looks beautiful when it is in flower. Are we going to force people to replant gorse?

CHAIR - Okay. Thanks again Gunadasa, Michael and Brian for your presentation.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.