



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

Hobart Airport Roundabout

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

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Legislative Council

Mr Farrell
Mr Valentine

House of Assembly

Mrs Rylah (Chair)
Mr Llewellyn
Mr Groom

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1 INTRODUCTION

To Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate Warner 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:-

Hobart Airport Roundabout

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 construct a four lane grade separated interchange to replace the existing Hobart Airport roundabout.
- 2.2 The current roundabout is operating at near-capacity, and during peak periods traffic is subject to significant queuing and delays. It is predicted that future traffic growth will significantly increase queuing and travel delays, particularly during peak periods.
- 2.3 The new grade separated interchange will alleviate these problems and provide safe, efficient and reliable access along the Tasman Highway, Holyman Avenue and Kennedy Drive for current and future predicted traffic volumes.
- 2.4 The proposed works include:
 - Reconstruction and upgrading of 1.6 km of the Tasman Highway including extension of the dual carriageway approximately 1 kilometre further east;
 - Grade separation of the Tasman Highway and Holyman Avenue/Kennedy Drive with Holyman Avenue/Kennedy Drive passing over the Tasman Highway;
 - Diamond interchange ramps with signalised ramp terminals;
 - Realignment of approximately 0.8 kilometres of Holyman Avenue and Kennedy Drive, and changes to the accesses of several industrial properties;
 - The provision of connections from the west-bound on ramp to the Tasman Highway to facilitate left-in left-out access for properties located on Cranston Parade; and
 - Realignment of local access roads.

3 PROJECT COSTS

- 3.1 Pursuant to the Message from Her Excellency the Governor-in-Council, the estimated cost of the work is P50 \$28.08 million, P90 \$29.99 million.

The following table details the cost estimates for the project:

Client Costs	
Scoping Phase	\$350,000
Development Phase	\$1,498,725
Delivery Phase	\$2,216,186
Total Client's Costs	\$4,064,911
Construction Costs	
Contractor Direct Costs	\$17,603,264
Client Supplied Materials or Services	\$886,000
Total Construction Cost	\$18,489,264
Project Cost	
Base Estimate	\$22,554,175
P50 Project Estimate (Total contingency 16%)	\$28,126,984
P90 Project Estimate (Total contingency 24%)	\$29,962,043

4 EVIDENCE

4.1 The Committee commenced its inquiry on Tuesday, 24 October last with an inspection of the site of the proposed works. The Committee then returned to Committee Room 2, Parliament Square building, whereupon the following witnesses appeared, made the Statutory Declaration and were examined by the Committee in public:-

- Frank Giana, Project Director, State Roads, Department of State Growth;
- Tori Harvey, A/G Environmental/Heritage Officer, State Roads, Department of State Growth; and
- David Conley, Project Manager, Pitt&Sherry.

Overview

4.2 Mr Giana provided an overview of the proposed works:

The Tasman Highway at this location was constructed in the early 1990s and is a dual carriageway; it is west of Holyman Avenue and the roundabout located at the junction of Holyman Avenue. The existing roundabout currently operates at near capacity; I do not think it is any secret that during peak hours significant queues now occur at the roundabout. It is predicted future growth will significantly increase the queuing and delay for vehicles, particularly during peak periods.

Significant growth has also predicted out of the Hobart International Airport through increased passenger numbers, increased freight task and commercial development within the airport precinct. The predicted growth is discussed extensively in the 2015 Hobart Airport Master Plan which predicts traffic out of the airport will increase by almost four times the current volumes. It is a significant increase.

The project involves reconstruction and upgrading of 1.6 kilometres of the Tasman Highway, including extension of the dual carriageway to about 1 kilometre further east from where it currently finishes. It also includes the removal of the roundabout. The idea of that is to free up traffic on the Tasman Highway and remove the bottleneck at the roundabout. As a consequence of that we have to put a grade separation in that will go over the top of the Tasman Highway to take Holyman Avenue and Kennedy Drive traffic.

The interchange will be a diamond format with traffic signals located at the ramp terminals. The reason we put traffic signals in is if we did not put them in now, we would come to a point in the future where we would have to put them in anyway because of the traffic volume increases, particularly out of the airport. We believe it is best value for money to put them in now.

The design would adequately cater for traffic growth until 2038. Even with the predicted traffic volumes in 2038, we will still have an adequate level of service. There is no reason to expect it would not still be serviceable even past that time, but we have only gone that far in our modelling.

Minimising the Environmental Impact of the Project

4.3 The Committee understood that the Department of State Growth (the Department) had considered a number of options to address the identified shortcomings at the Hobart Airport roundabout. The Committee also understood that one of the key factors in determining the final project design was minimising the environmental impact of the project, in particular, on the threatened grassland

species located within the project site, in order to be confident of gaining environmental approvals. The Committee noted that the final design resulted in the smallest possible direct impact on these grassland species and sought further information from the witnesses on how this had been achieved:

Mr GROOM - I have a supplementary question and it goes to the comments you were making in the briefing this morning about the EPBC Act approval process. You seemed to be suggesting that if you had a direct access onto Holyman Avenue, that would involve an impact of a larger area of land, and you believed that may trigger a controlled action process with a potential time implication for the project. Can you give us a feel for that?

Ms HARVEY - As David has probably explained, we went through a number of design iterations, and there were other factors involved in this, to minimise our environmental impact. We went with the final design we have. We reduced the impact to the critically endangered grasslands of Tasmania from about 4.5 hectares down to 1.27 hectares.

Also with this new design, we had a smaller area that is fragmented by this proposed design. Given the constraints and balancing all the other considerations, this was a design we felt would be able to meet our environmental requirements. We worked with the Commonwealth and we involved them early in the piece. We let them know we were going through these design iterations and we know we have a federally listed grassland. We had a couple of phone conversations with them regarding the proposed design and we did a lot of work with them to familiarise them with the project and to demonstrate to them we had been through a few design iterations to get to this point without compromising environmental safety standards.

We are intending to offset the remainder of the grassland and also some of those state listed species. Our intention is to do that through a Crown land order and we have a supporting management plan. Effectively, it protects those values in perpetuity.

Mr LLEWELLYN - Where are the offsets going to be?

Ms HARVEY - The offsets will be in situ. They will be within the balance of the remaining land after the constructions works. This morning DPIPW provided us with a lot of advice on how to best preserve those values. We are taking their advice and going with that. We are still yet to receive the formal notice from the Commonwealth regarding our EPBC application. This morning, informal advice is the works themselves will not be seen as a controlled action and therefore will not require a permit at this stage.

Mr GROOM - For the record, because I know you have not had that confirmation yet, if your assessment was correct, under the current design, is it more likely it's not a controlled action? If you had an alternative design that had a larger impact area and it was deemed to be a controlled action, what sort of time delay could that involve? I know it is hard to assess these things, but can you give an idea of what that would be?

Ms HARVEY - I would say, maybe at a minimum, two years. Given the congestion issues and issues relating to that, the decision was made higher above that we couldn't go with that. There is a need to get this project rolled out as soon as possible. In conversation with our general manager, Shane, and also Adil Jamil, Manager of Project Services, State Roads, that decision was made to minimise that impact so we can continue with the project. We feel comfortable that we have a very good environmental solution for this project.

Access to and from Properties on Cranston Parade

4.4 Cranston Parade provides access to three properties to the west of the existing Hobart Airport roundabout. The proposed works will change this access by providing connections from the westbound on ramp to Cranston Parade that will allow left turn in and left turn out movements only. Therefore, drivers on Cranston Parade wishing to travel to the airport or further east from Cranston Parade would be required to exit onto the Tasman Highway and travel to the west to turn around

at the Acton Road Interchange, resulting in a total additional travel distance of approximately 6km.

- 4.5 In its submission, the Department highlighted other options that had been considered for providing access to and from Cranston Parade to the Tasman Highway and the reasons why these had been rejected:

Other options for the location of Cranston Parade that have been investigated include:

- *Direct connection to Holyman Avenue opposite Llanherne Drive at the existing roundabout within the airport road network approximately 280 metres from the Tasman Highway. This proposal would impact a much greater area of the threatened grassland and advice from the Federal Department of the Environment and Energy was that it would not support such a proposal. Hobart International Airport (HIAPL) has also rejected this proposal*
- *Diversion to the west and onto Acton Road. This option has been discussed with Clarence City Council who were very negative about Cranston Parade connecting to Acton Road. They believed that the current zoning would not support this connection. The majority of the land serviced by Cranston Parade is zoned “light industrial” with some “rural resource”. Any diversion of Cranston Parade to the west would need to cross land zoned as rural living and Council viewed this as incompatible with the planning scheme*
- *Direct connection to Holyman Avenue between the southern ramp terminals and Llanherne Drive roundabout. This location is not favoured because the distance between the ramp terminals and Llanherne Drive is only 300 metres and the Cranston Parade junction would be in close proximity to the proposed access for the existing BP service station and proposed slip lane for Hobart bound vehicles entering the westbound on ramp. If a junction were introduced at this location there would then be three junctions/intersections to be negotiated by eastbound traffic entering the airport before reaching the Llanherne Drive roundabout. Whilst the two signalised ramp terminal intersections will operate efficiently introduction of a third junction at this location is likely to reduce that efficiency and introduce additional conflict points*
- *Direct connection to the westbound on ramp. This proposal would require the first 250 metres of the westbound off ramp to be a two way road and introduce a junction onto the on ramp. Such a situation, whilst not unprecedented, is not good practice and the presence of slow moving Cranston Parade traffic entering and leaving the on ramp mixed with vehicles accelerating to enter the 110 km/h Tasman Highway is highly undesirable and may create safety issues. The junction would need to be signalised and also would act to limit free flow of traffic leaving the airport. The proposal has also been reviewed by an independent Road Safety Auditor who concluded that “The*

proposal is an unconventional arrangement which appears to have a high risk of crashes.”¹

- 4.6 The Committee was aware of concerns regarding the proposed access provided to and from Cranston Parade. The Department noted in its submission that one landowner who owns property accessed via Cranston Parade, Mr Greg Casimaty, did not support the proposed access arrangements, as it would result in a less direct access to the Tasmania Highway than currently enjoyed. The Committee asked the witnesses to expand on the proposed Cranston Parade access arrangements and why other options were not considered viable:

Mr CONLEY - With Greg Casimaty, we looked at various options to provide access to that property. The owner would like direct access to Holyman Avenue. We attempted to reach an agreement with the airport over an access across airport land to Holyman Avenue and that was not supported by the airport. They said there are competitive aspects to providing direct access into the airport precinct for a landowner who might be offering commercial land for use of airport support services, so they didn't support it on commercial grounds. They didn't support it on grounds that the environmental issues were seen to be significant. Tori spoke about that earlier today, the difficulties in gaining approvals if what is seen as excessive amounts of threatened grassland is taken up and the footprint we've got in the project constrains or limits that to the minimum possible.

The third blocker, as we understand, is from the federal Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, Aviation Division, which did not support a connection across that land. Ultimately, having tried to make it work, we didn't see it as the department's responsibility. Should the department continue to press for a direct access onto Holyman Drive? The department's view was that we will proceed with the interchange as designed and we will provide a left turn-in, left turn-out arrangement onto the ramp for all properties in Cranston Parade.

I will go to other aspects that were looked at. We talked to Clarence City Council about the possibility of a connection back to Acton Road, either going all the way back to the Acton Road interchange or connecting back through residential areas onto Acton Road. We didn't get any support from council on that, other than zoning Casimaty's land as light industrial. The rest of it is a residential zone and their stated view was that it is not appropriate to have an industrial access going through a residential area. We could well expect there would be significant opposition if the trucks we saw this morning were running along rural properties on Acton Road. That looked highly problematic to us.

We have provided a good standard of access to Mr Casimaty, left-in, left-out, effectively directly onto the highway. In one sense it is a high quality access but it does not provide all the turning movements. The down side for anybody on Cranston Parade wishing to go to the airport or to the east is that they have to drive to Acton Road. The total extra journey is about 6 kilometres.

Mr LLEWELLYN - What would be the consequence of moving Cranston Parade further back towards the interchange at the point where the roadwork starts to incline, widening the slip road through and continuing it to the west to enable people coming from Cranston Parade to turn in on a slip road and into the road further west?

Mr CONLEY - Are you implying that Cranston Parade junction onto the Tasman Highway further to the west?

¹ Hobart Airport Interchange - Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, Department of State Growth, October 2017, page 6-7

Mr LLEWELLYN - No, what I am proposing is that at that point, where we have the build-up - to enable people going westward, they can come off at that point and continue. The problem is if they are going the other way, they have to go through to Acton. If they were to turn there and this slip road was wide enough, even extending it westward, would that create the situation where traffic could then go both ways?

Mr CONLEY - Cranston Parade is currently a cul-de-sac and it extends to the last property. I do not think extending it westward, other than if it was connecting onto the highway, would solve the problem. It's more about where you are connected in at the eastern end. The first design we had brought Cranston Parade around here and joined it into this Llanherne Drive roundabout.

There is the existing roundabout and we had this configuration here. That fragmented it and took more of the grassland, which is one of the values the people who do the EPBC assessments don't favour. It diminishes the viability. For that approval reason we didn't proceed with that option. We would have needed a lot more airport land to do that and we have hit blocks with the airport.

What else could you do? Could you bring it in here? It becomes a five-way intersection, which is not something you do today. We have also looked at a connection here, but we then introduced another junction on top of all the roundabouts that exist in the airport, a signalised intersection and one other plus the aspect of running two-way traffic. The traffic from Cranston Parade would have to cross this one-way traffic exiting the airport.

For all those reasons, it became problematic and the department's view was we should proceed with this with a left-in, left-out as something we think will work in the interim. Building this doesn't preclude any of these other things happening in the future. The environmental approval won't become easier in 10 or 20 years' time, but at a physical level there is nothing we are doing that says by building this you've suddenly cut off your options. Once we build the bridge there, we won't be moving that in the next 50 to 100 years. If the airport had a change of mind and agreed to a connection here, further down or back to Acton Road, those things can still happen in future. Despite all the discussion around Cranston Parade and the future plans, the traffic that uses that property is fairly low.

Mr LLEWELLYN - At the moment.

Mr CONLEY - Yes, that's at the moment. We are planning for the long term with the interchange, but there is a long way to go before that property develops into a bigger traffic generator. We have considered a number of options for locating Cranston Parade and this is what we have come up with as a solution that enables the project to move forward, all other things being equal. It doesn't rule out future changes.

Impact on Local Businesses

4.7 The Committee noted that businesses located near the current roundabout may be impacted by the new interchange, due to being less visible from the Tasman Highway and changes in access. The Committee sought further information from the witnesses on how these businesses would be affected and what would be done to minimise any negative impacts:

Mr GROOM - Is there any further information you are able to provide about potential impacts for local business and how are you seeking to accommodate those concerns in the design?

Mr CONLEY - With the businesses, the two or three that will be impacted the most were the ones we discussed this morning, being the Airport Hotel, the service station and that associated precinct. We had discussions with the owners of that site. We have not spoken to the leaseholders. Sultan Holdings are the people we have dealt with as they are leaseholders of the Hobart Airport. In turn they sublet various operations to those other businesses.

Access is still very good to those sites. Access is not diminished, but I understand their concerns are around visibility of the business and, as they see it, particularly with the service station; I believe they call it opportunistic. Their understanding is that a lot of people decide to go into the service station by virtue of approaching it and see it is a 'There are only two cars there, let us go in' scenario. That is a big driver of their business.

We believe it is a high standard access. It is for the benefit of the airport and the Tasman Highway traffic. Ability to drive to these premises is not diminished to any great degree. When there is congestion at the roundabout, under current circumstances, arguably it would be easier to drive to these businesses with the grade separation. There is this visibility of the business; the opportunism from the highway. We have said to the owners that we would erect signs - the standard tourist signs, the blue information signs - alerting people to the fact the businesses are there.

The other point is that with both significant growth on the Tasman Highway and with growth of around four times the current number coming out of the airport, you would think there is an upside and downside here. Maybe long term the business should be no worse off, if not better off, in future. That is how we have assessed it and the view we have put to the owners. That probably deals with those businesses.

Response to Matters Raised in Public Submissions

4.8 The Committee received one submission in response to the advertisement calling for submissions on the project. In his submission, Mr Chris Merridew asked three questions regarding the project, and the Committee sought responses from the witnesses to these questions at the public hearing:

Mr LLEWELLYN - We have approved this other submission that came in from Mr Merridew and he is asking three questions. The first, 'By virtue of Seven Mile Beach link there are some additional 2000 movements, which I hope are in current modelling.'

Mr CONLEY - The answer to that is, yes, they are. We recognise the loss of Surf Road, I think it is, the road at the southern end of the airport that has now been closed and replaced with Grueber Avenue. Yes, we recognised that and the traffic modelling we have done, as Frank said, took in volumes predicted in the Hobart Airport Master Plan.

Mr LLEWELLYN - The second one and it is probably the same thing, 'Does the modelling take into account the visions for the movement to the north via a potential link bypassing Cambridge, Richmond to Brighton Hub?'

Mr GIANA - I know that one. It comes out of Acton Road at the roundabout. Any traffic that currently comes down to Cambridge Road would be heading out towards the east and would come out of Acton Road. That almost shortcuts the main street of Cambridge. A lot of the traffic would still do what it currently does and any extra traffic would be on Acton Road rather than coming down here. There might be some who might decide to go all the way around the back, past the old airport, but it would not be a significant volume because most would turn in and come onto the highway at Acton Road, as they would now. I would not see a huge difference.

Mr LLEWELLYN - The third, 'Does the low-level waterfront land get considered as a corridor for four new lanes to service the first causeway (an opportunity to keep road traffic further north of any future runway extension)?'

Mr GIANA - That is in planning at the moment. The department is looking at that corridor. Where we are finishing the dual carriageway, the extension of this would not stop you moving the alignment around. At the moment, if someone ever built four lanes through there it is likely to be on the northern side. You would not think they would put it towards the airport, it would be on the other side. Nothing we are doing here will defect any alignment in the future, I would not have thought.

Mr CONLEY - The airport is being extended. They have done the runway extension on that northern end as part of current work, so they will not be extending that for a long time into the future. At this stage you would expect the existing Tasman Highway, single carriageway, which might be a westbound carriageway under a future four lanes, would probably stay where it is. It might move a little bit north. There is probably no need to move it north, given the extension has already occurred to the airport.

Mr GIANA - If they ever did a major runway extension it will either go one way, or the other way; into the water. If it was to go to the highway they would probably do what they have done in Sydney. They have put it underneath their runway where they have a major road going under the runway. Here, it is a long way away before they would do anything like that, I would have thought.

Provision for Cyclists

4.9 The Committee, noting the increase in cycling tourism, sought details on what facilities had been provided for cyclists. The witnesses noted that there had been no specific dedicated cycling facilities incorporated into the design, however, the new interchange and highway upgrade would result in a significant improvement in conditions for cyclists:

Mr VALENTINE - It is complex with traffic flows through here, but given this is the main road to Port Arthur, what about cyclists? They have to negotiate this and I am interested to know how they are being catered for?

Mr GIANA - In a way, it will be easier for cyclists on the highway in that they won't have to navigate the roundabout. There is a 2-metre shoulder all the way through and if you go further to the east we have a cycleway, which is the shoulder - I know because I built it years ago - and it will connect straight into that. The other issue would be there are ramps coming in and they would have to be careful but there is no reason a cyclist wouldn't be able to travel down the highway more easily than they currently do. The roundabout must be a nightmare to ride a bike through, I would have thought.

Mr VALENTINE - And those heading to the airport?

Mr GIANA - There is a metre-wide shoulder on the ramps. Being signalised at the top, you are improving. It is a low speed environment and it would be fairly easy to get a bike through there. They'd fit in with the traffic, as they would in the centre of Hobart.

Mr VALENTINE - So they have been considered?

Mr GIANA - Yes. We haven't provided actual facilities but they have been considered in providing a facility that would make it better than it currently is.

Does the Project Meet Identified Needs and Provide Value for Money?

4.10 In assessing any proposed public work, the Committee seeks assurance that each project is a good use of public funds and meets identified needs. The Committee therefore sought confirmation from the witnesses that the proposed works were fit for purpose and a good use of public resources:

CHAIR - A couple of brief questions we need to ensure we have asked to meet the provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1914. Does the project meet identified needs or solve a recognised problem?

Mr GIANA - It does.

CHAIR - Do you believe this project is fit for purpose?

Mr GIANA - It is

CHAIR - *Is it the best solution to meet identified needs or solve a recognised problem within the allocated budget?*

Mr GIANA - *We believe it is.*

CHAIR - *Is the project, in your opinion, value for money?*

Mr GIANA - *We believe so.*

CHAIR - *Do you believe the project is, because there are a few, a good use of public funds?*

Mr GIANA - *Definitely.*

5 DOCUMENTS TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE

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

- Hobart Airport Interchange - Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, Department of State Growth, October 2017; and
- Submission from Mr Chris Merridew, dated 20 October 2017.

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 The Committee is satisfied that the need for the proposed works has been established. Once completed, the proposed works will deliver a four-lane grade separated interchange that will provide safe, efficient and reliable access along the Tasman Highway, Holyman Avenue and Kennedy Drive. The proposed works will provide a solution to the significant traffic congestion problems that drivers currently experience at the Hobart Airport roundabout, will cater for predicted future traffic volumes, and will provide a safe and effective connection to the Tasman Highway for properties on local access roads.
- 6.2 Accordingly, the Committee recommends the Hobart Airport Roundabout, at an estimated cost of P50 \$28.08 million, P90 \$29.99 million, in accordance with the documentation submitted.

**Parliament House
Hobart
4 December 2017**

**Joan Rylah MP
Chair**

