

THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET AT WYNYARD ON WEDNESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2009.

TARKINE ROAD

Mr PHIL CANTILLON, DIRECTOR OPERATIONS BRANCH; **Mr GAR FOONG**, CONSULTANT PROJECT SERVICES, ROADS AND TRAFFIC DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE, ENERGY AND RESOURCES; **Mr DION LESTER** AND **Mr RICHARD GERATHY**, CONSULTANTS, PITT & SHERRY, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Harriss) - Thank you very much, gentlemen. We want to thank you for facilitating the site visit for us.

Mr CANTILLON - Just as a little bit of background to the project, setting the scene, as you would have seen over the last few days the tourist road is connected at one end from Myalla Road through to the Arthur River township. It extends 131 km. There is a \$23 million budget set aside for it. Within the \$23 million, there's \$2.5 million set aside for tourism-related infrastructure; that's the infrastructure side, not so much the experience side. In addition, for the purposes of that \$2.5 million, there's in the order of 8.9 km of access roads and car parks, which bring the total road length up to 140 km. As you would have seen over the last day and a half, most of the existing roads and tracks are in place. The figure is almost 90 per cent and some of the roads are very substantial. DIER is very pleased to have this project and it has been a great collaboration with Forestry Tasmania through the development. It's a project that came across to DIER in February this year and it has been great to be involved in it and delivering it. It is very pleasing to be at the panel so quickly; it is roughly nine months since we first got the project so we have worked very hard at getting to the point where we can present it.

We also think that there are some enormous benefits in DIER's stewardship in delivering the project. We are very committed to it and we have a very strong team behind it. We believe that, through our wide consultation with both the broader community and environmental groups, we have a strong understanding of the issues. We have a clear process in terms of resolving any particular issues that are raised for the betterment of the project and also to create something that is a legacy for future road projects around the State, so we think there are enormous benefits for DIER in this regard.

In terms of breaking down the road components themselves, what you would have seen over the last day and a half are existing sealed roads requiring no work - in the order of 20 kilometres. The project involves sealing existing roads in the order of 65 kilometres. There is widening of the current road and constructing sealed pavements in the order of 31 kilometres. There is a new link section, which you have seen either side, that joins onto existing gravel sections in the order of about 5.4 kilometres. Then there are a number of short deviations which are designed for engineering, aesthetic or safety reasons. We saw one such example at Rapid River, you may recall.

In terms of preparing for this project, we spent a lot of time in trying to determine the outcomes we wanted to achieve because if we knew what outcomes we were hoping to achieve it would well position us to continue to develop that project. Also, for us as a team, it is something that we would benchmark ourselves against. We scanned all the material, spoke to a number of people and we came up with four key outcomes we want to achieve through this. One was that we saw the project as improving accessibility. It was about providing safe tourist and recreational access to the region for all Tasmanians and wider visitors. At the moment only a very small group can get access to the area. This is a project that provides the widest possible accessibility and in doing so provides access to wilderness areas free of charge.

In terms of the tourism potential, we saw Phantom Valley before, a magnificent area. Once people get to see Phantom Valley they will be encouraged to go further and deeper into the road length. That varied experience, most importantly for the regional economy, will provide the opportunity to increase the overnight stays. At the moment there are day visits but there may not be necessarily be overnight visits. This project provides a key opportunity to increase those overnight bed stays and hold them for a number of days with the concept of the project being a number of loops within loops where you can get in and get off quickly and move onto another section as part of that development.

In addition to that we saw that it was very important for DIER to ensure that we met our environmental responsibilities and undertakings, so the project is about construction in full compliance with all regulatory requirements, whether local, State or Federal. The project is also about minimising the environmental impact and protection of the local flora, fauna and heritage values - and in particular things like the Tasmanian devil. As part of doing so, we have had to develop measures - and we are still developing measures now - which are adaptive throughout the entire life of the project. They are ones that we've conceived now, further into the design stage, construction and operation, which we will continue to respond to any of the challenges through the life of the project. They involve programs, management regimes and mitigation actions through that entire life cycle.

One of the key hallmarks of the project is communication. When we started the project, Gar, as project manager, was developing it technically but at the same time we saw it as very important to understand the issues of the community in the first sense, but then we extended that out into a much wider group. Our communications have been very positive. We think, on balance, there is very strong local support and demonstrated need for the project. All our consultation with all groups, including the Tarkine Coalition, have been open, transparent and thorough.

I will just give a thumbnail sketch of a couple of points on the existing situation. Roughly 90 per cent of the roads are formed in some fashion. Most roads are of a high standard, particularly on the western end. On the eastern end they're predominantly only accessible by four-wheel-drive vehicles. In that context, the road in its current form doesn't provide an appropriate level of visitor access for tourism, particularly to the tourism sites. Taking into account its gravel state, it's very difficult to encourage people in hire cars to travel to those areas without there being a sealed-road environment.

We have a map that provides that overall setting of the project. The purple section is the extent of the road, extending at the eastern end from the tip of Myalla Road, heading due

west across to Couta Rocks and up to Arthur River. The sharp red contrasting colour is the extent of the Tarkine Forest reserves. The bulk of the road is outside of those reserves, through working forests and multiple-use forests, and only touches that generally on the existing road network.

The first sections are within the bailiwick of Waratah-Wynyard Council and we've been negotiating with them in terms of the form of the road construction through those first few kilometres. The first few sections are of tourist-road standard - four metres plus 0.75 metre gravel shoulders, so the road environment is almost there.

Mr GERATHY - This gives an indication of, as you saw this morning, the standard of the attraction.

Mr CANTILLON - You are heading into Hilders Bridge.

Mr GERATHY - Yes. That was Hilders Bridge before the last of it was washed away.

(Mr Cantillon explained the slides.)

Mr GERATHY - You can see by the number of shots and the length of this on the map that it is quite an extensive section of sealed road and high-quality gravel road. These are still FT sections of road. Once you cross the Western Explorer Junction you are onto a DIER section of road.

Mr CANTILLON - It is about at this point where the red dial is that we transition back into a 4-metre tourist section of road through to the Couta Rocks junction and heading north up to the Arthur River township. That is the tour.

The substantial length of road there and also the substantial extent of the road to the extent that those 6-metre wide sections are already designed for the heavier traffic, the pavements have been well built, they have been tested by log traffic for a number of years - not large volumes of log traffic - are in a good state. More often than not on those sections through the testing that we have done, our requirements will simply be to just reshape them and seal them. As you head further east, there are materials to be added before they are sealed but they are very strong pavements overall, which is a great outcome of the project to build upon.

Regarding the next slide there, road ownership, the greatest proportion all adds up to about 140 kilometres, if I have my maths right, and the FT section represents about 105 kilometres. Waratah and Wynyard is 5 kilometres on that eastern side, Circular Head is 14 kilometres and DIER has that section from the Western Explorer across to Couta Rocks, which represents about 16 kilometres.

It is probably worth pointing out on the previous slide, for the purposes of road ownership we are currently negotiating with Forestry Tasmania for making its roads public so we are looking at going through a process for the roads generally to the west of Tayatea Bridge which we would make public through a process with the Executive Council but there are sections predominantly to the east of that point which will require going before both Houses of Parliament after the election. We see that as a key requirement of the project and because of the fact that we are making these roads public,

the roads and the bridges will be designed and constructed to DIER standards and we see that ongoing commitment to ownership and future maintenance of the road is an essential element of DIER's stewardship of the project.

CHAIR - Just on that matter if I can, Phil - it is a question that I was going to come to later, if you would not mind - in converting the existing forestry roads to, if I can call it DIER jurisdiction, if you like, am I right in presuming that does not require any legislative action, it is only, as your submission says, the revocation of the status of some of the State forest land, so can we will deal with those two matters?

Mr CANTILLON - Yes, that is right.

CHAIR - There is no legislative change required to just convert ownership?

Mr CANTILLON - We are able to use one of the existing elements of the legislation to make substantial sections of the road public now. If there is an existing FT road there we can make that public. In those areas where the road may need to be widened beyond the current formation that we have, those sections will be required to go before both Houses of Parliament.

Mr GREEN - In what form, though, he is asking.

Mr CANTILLON - That is using existing Forestry Act legislative requirements. We have had discussions with FT about introducing a legislative amendment to the Forestry Act that would enable us to carry out works on forestry roads with a similar ability to that which currently exists under the Local Government (Highways) Act so as a separate initiative to those two planks, which is using the existing Forestry Act and legislation, we are looking at amending it but it's something that we are in discussions with FT over at this point in time and that, again, would require going back to both Houses of Parliament in the new calendar year.

CHAIR - As I read on page 6 of the submission, the conversion of ownership from Forestry to DIER doesn't require legislative measure?

Mr CANTILLON - No.

CHAIR - But revoking the State forest reserve land upon which some parts of the road may be constructed does require legislative measure?

Mr CANTILLON - Going back to both Houses of Parliament, that's correct.

CHAIR - Greg has a question on that, but first I would like to formally acknowledge the Mayor of Waratah-Wynyard Council, Kevin Hyland, and Ruth Forrest, MLC for this area. Welcome to you both; we are happy to have you along.

Mr HALL - Phil, whilst we're on road ownership, this morning we travelled on that bit that is currently owned by, I think, Wynyard-Waratah, Myalla Road. How far advanced in negotiations are you with that local authority at this stage?

Mr CANTILLON - We've had discussions at officer level in the council in relation to it. In terms of ownership, we're not looking at owning the section of road but at negotiating about the future maintenance of that section of road. This is something that would be a subject of the development application that we put in in December.

Mr HALL - And Circular Head, too, we've got 14-odd kilometres there. Would that be in the same sort of vein?

Mr CANTILLON - It could be potentially, yes.

Mr HALL - Have you spoken with the council?

Mr CANTILLON - Yes, we've spoken to the council.

Mr HALL - Have you been getting positive feedback?

Mr CANTILLON - Oh yes, we haven't had any concerns raised whatsoever.

Mr GREEN - In respect to the timing of any start of the project, are you suggesting to the committee that the project can't start at all until after the Parliament has reconvened or are you suggesting that some sections can begin?

Mr CANTILLON - We're approaching the project on a number of fronts. For example, you've seen us come before the parliamentary standing committee, you've seen the environmental referral submitted, development applications will be submitted. We plan through December to hold the industry briefing. We have recently received approval from the Department of Treasury and Finance for tendering the project. There is an early contractor involvement. All these measures would go on concurrently while we're waiting for the regulatory approvals to come into place. We've got all the planning done, we're ready to go and the minute that we can set foot on construction or some early works activities, they would be got under way early in the calendar year.

In terms of that particular question you asked, we wouldn't be able to award a contract to start physical construction until those legislative changes have occurred, but we believe that the time frame of those legislative changes are consistent with the overall timings that we're pursuing for the project. So no detriment, if I can put it that way.

Mr GREEN - Yes, provided it goes through both Houses of Parliament.

Mr CANTILLON - Yes, for those sections of road that require it. The sections immediately to the west of Tayatea Bridge for the most part don't require it.

Mr GREEN - Hence my question, you can start at the western end of the bridge?

Mr CANTILLON - Subject to environmental approvals.

CHAIR - I have some more questions around that particular matter but maybe if we just proceed with the presentation because some of that might come out, Phil, as you go through it.

Mr CANTILLON - You might have seen a number of traffic counters when we were out on the road. That's trying to build up our knowledge base in terms of what sort of traffic volumes are occurring out there. The key proposition is understanding what future traffic volumes will be. Obviously the tourism proposals have suggested the likely number of visitors to the area and the traffic potential. These are key considerations that we have had to take into account in terms of the environmental approvals process because the whole issue there is about understanding the extent of traffic and how you are going to calm that traffic to mitigate the potential road kill that may occur. So to that end in terms of understanding the existing situation, we have a number of traffic counts programmed for summer and winter of 2010.

We also understand in terms of the existing situation there are very few reported crashes within the area that we have been made aware of. To increase the road safety of the area, we are looking at making sure that we have a curvy linear road environment. In practice what it means is that you have a curvy, bendy road thereby providing visual cues for the drivers to travel at the designed speeds we are anticipating for the road. So we were driving on the road over the last day-and-a-half very comfortably at 40 to 50 kph; if you are driving more than that it is too quick and it is not very forgiving. When it is sealed we do not expect that the travel speeds will be too much above that, maybe in some sections out in the far western end, in the straighter sections of the log-interaction traffic. But in particular hot-spots for animals, we will have some specific traffic-calming measures.

Also, we have held a number of negotiations with FT about sections 2 to 16 - Myalla Road to just short of Tayatea Bridge. We are potentially looking at load-limiting those sections of roads as well. That would not necessarily preclude tourist buses but it will be under permanent arrangement.

Speed limits are also being considered but our preference is to have a built road environment that, intuitively, changes the driver's speed rather than rely on a regulatory environment.

In terms of justification, a swag of analysis has been done. I think this project started back in about 2004 and subsequent to that there were a number studies - the Stanley Tourism Precinct Study in 2006, the EDMA-Moore Consulting marketing report in 2008, followed by the Bruce Felmingham economic analysis. The key outcomes that we gleaned from that prior work in a sense have been confirmed through our own informal discussions with the broader tourism community, whether it be a council, regional tourism association, a small private operator or an award winning business. The key message through the entire consultation is that we desperately need some venture out here that is going to encourage the visitors, provide a richer local tourism experience, keep them in the area and increase the number of overnight stays. There is lack of experience-rich products, like a Tarkine Falls or a Phantom Valley, and the current poor conversion of day visits to overnight. You come in, you go out. This is creating a loop-road environment where you can come in for short sections or experience the entire loop.

So there has been a swag of analysis in the past, and various forms of it - local tourism precinct, supplemented by Moore Consulting, the Bruce Felmingham analysis - were all commissioned prior to February this year by FT. The aspects we identified were lack of experience-rich products. We saw Lake Chisholm the other day but how many people

are getting across to Lake Chisholm? We would argue not as many as there could be by gaining access to a facility of that nature. Obviously Phantom Valley was fantastic and the Tarkine Reserve was very good. The project is about accessibility. The benefit of the project is the overnight stays, as I mentioned. In the current situation there is a heavy reliance on Stanley as the main drawcard, with people coming in and out. This is about getting those loops.

Mr BEST - On the project justification, we often get representation and comment in my office in Devonport about the pressure on Cradle Mountain and the Overland Track. That is obviously a national icon but looking at the figures in the report - 215 000 or thereabouts - are we looking at a new market here? How would that assist with pressure we have on other visitation places? I know this is all subject to progressive forward planning and projected figures, but I'm interested in what your thoughts might be.

Mr CANTILLON - We've been working very strongly with Tourism Tasmania on this and we've been guided by them in terms of developing the tourism facilities. I suppose the key thing we've drawn from it is that this is about having a complementary tourism experience, not necessarily of the same nature. Diversity is very important in the tourism game, as we understand. It's not our background but this is what we're coming to grips with. This is about extending the number of stays that people will have in Tasmania. In terms of pressure on Cradle Mountain -

Mr BEST - We get that from time to time, and pressure on the Overland Track itself. The operators up there are happy to have as many people as they can. If I am reading this correctly, you're saying that it is in the same market as Cradle Mountain but it is a different experience. It may not only enhance the tourism image for the State but will also offer an alternative choice and may also encourage people to come this way when they may have gone to Cradle Mountain, or try to fit both in.

Mr CANTILLON - Or to look into other areas.

The key thing out of the Felmingham analysis was the benefit-cost ratio. It was quite a detailed analysis and the key outcome was the benefit-cost ratio of 1.9, which means a net increase in welfare to the community of 1.93 for every dollar spent on the project.

Mr GERATHY - An example of that, anecdotally, was one of the honey producers we visited. He was really interested in the project and said it would enable him to put in an extra 1 000 hives. That would equate to an extra 130 tonnes of leatherwood honey so that has the potential of adding over \$400 000 to his turnover per annum. One of the things that excited him was that this road would enable him to tell the story of leatherwood honey and so for the broader region to develop their food brand as well. He was looking at diversifying his business from being a honey business to then interacting more with tourists and, just as we have wine tours, having honey tours as well. He was pretty keen on it. That's just one example of the type of spin-off activities. There will be economic activities out there that we haven't dreamt of yet; once you get the infrastructure in place entrepreneurs will come along and generate new employment opportunities and new economic-generation activities.

Mrs NAPIER - The Moore study seems to be premised on the fact that the Tarkine loop completing all three stages would have significant additional benefit as compared to the

assessments that are made of the east drive and the west loop, yet within the report that we were provided with anyhow it doesn't explain the rationale of why there should be such an exponential increase in tourism spending in visitor nights and, in turn, jobs created. Obviously there is a link between the three but it didn't actually deal with that issue. Intuitively you might say that people don't like going backwards on tourism drives but was there any analysis done of the trade-off? If people can come in and touch the Tarkine at Phantom Valley, for example, was there any analysis, through the Moore analysis or any other, of the fact that that might actually be the incentive not to go up to Smithton or not to head in the direction of the rest of the Tarkine?

Mr CANTILLON - I am not aware of that. Certainly in talking with a number of the operators who were consulted through the Moore work, whose views I think were captured in it, having that link road going through to the Western Explorer was seen as more complementary because it was about the diversity of the options that were available to travel around that area and it was a case of, 'Well, Phantom Valley is very important to it because it's diverse, it's a different experience to Lake Chisholm, a different experience to pulling up at Couta Rocks or other locations like that at the edge of the world' and it was about having a drawcard on a number of areas. So I don't think through our work since February that we've picked up any diverse criticism.

I don't think there's been any real views about not having that middle section to link up. I think it's been seen as more important from all the tourism operators, both small and award winning, that having that link and that continuity in link is about drawing them into that wider area. The Moore Consulting work was predicated on, I suppose, a number of links in there; it was saying that if you've got that infrastructure in place and you are investment ready, you then have the ability to encourage investors to come into the area like Phantom Valley. So one of the key planks of the project and \$100 000 being funded out of the \$23 million is about working out issues and options and constraints associated with Phantom Valley, what types of developments, both small and large, may fit into that area and what sort of statutory planning requirements would need to be in place. So it's about while we're delivering the road, also trying to position ourselves to be as investment ready as is possible to try to achieve the sort of figures that Moore Consulting is suggesting that we might derive from the project.

Mrs NAPIER - There are two questions that follow from that. One is, what assessment has been made of the potential impact of increased traffic and access into the area before some of those infrastructure issues have been developed? All reports talk about the potential for private developer enhancement of infrastructure and experience, and we would all agree with that, that it is not the role of government to necessarily do that. But just on some of those spots that we link to I would think that you would have a significant increase of people who want to go and camp, stop and spend time rather than necessarily drive for the whole experience. The budget that we have here certainly does not deal with any allocation for building any of that infrastructure and facility at those points, for example, Phantom Valley.

Mr CANTILLON - No, that is right. The tourism development component is about the infrastructure, it is not necessarily the investment of it, so it is access roads, car parks, toilets, foot bridges and things of that nature and they are about positioning that area for future growth. The access and the car park into Lake Chisholm is an important part of

the project but not necessarily the track hardening around the lake in terms of walks and things of that nature.

Mrs NAPIER - Who is going to pay for that?

Mr CANTILLON - I suppose that is not in our bailiwick. Our bailiwick was to deliver a project of a certain scope, but what we are doing is from day one when we got the project we saw that it was very important to consult with the broader community and tourism operators both on a one-on-one level from a local operator in Stanley and we have gone out as wide as Devonport, the Tourism Association right across to Smithton. We have gone in as deep as people like Tarkine Trails and Richard Summers and we are working very closely with Tourism Tasmania so that we with Tourism Tasmania can provide that catalyst for future growth to occur through stimulating the private sector industry.

Mrs NAPIER - I accept that you are saying your job is to build a road and what we are doing is looking at not only the building of the road and the cost parameters associated with that but also the impact upon the nature of the Tarkine experience, its end-term objective. What assessment then is there of the risk to the Tarkine experience that might result from a lot of people going to some of those entry points before the infrastructure is provided? You cannot exactly say, 'Don't stop here because we're not ready for you yet'. There are the same issues at Bay of Fires, we have a lot of people who like to go there and they have a demonstrable impact upon the environment when they arrive.

Mr CANTILLON - What would have been very evident on the drive is that to the east of Tarkine Falls is existing infrastructure. You can get into Lake Chisholm, you can get into Julius River. There are toilets there. There are facilities for parking your Winnebagos and having a barbecue, shelters and walks and things so there is existing infrastructure in there. What we are doing is consolidating. We are grabbing a gravel access road and sealing it. We've got a car park at Lake Chisholm that's already in place. We are making it slightly larger so that buses can come in there, but we're sealing it. We're adding a toilet to Lake Chisholm and to Tarkine Falls. We think that the best way we can prepare for an onslaught of visitors and tourism operators is - and the very clear message we've got - that you must have the infrastructure in place and that's what this is about. It's about getting the access, about toilets and signage and people safely getting around that area.

Mr GERATHY - I think it's also worth remembering that it will take three years to build. During the construction program, for instance, some of the visitor facilities will be constructed, so the capacity of the region will be built up over that time. As construction is progressing on the road, so it will on various facilities. That will sort of build up the capacity as time goes by to approaching the opening.

Mr CANTILLON - I think another key feature is that the way we are contracting this isn't the way we normally do our business. We have a special contracting approach which is about the quality of the discussion, understanding the issues, dealing with the issues, being very transparent about it, responding to it, making sure all the controls are in place, not just in an environmental sense but also whether it's Richard Summers and the Tarkine Wilderness Lodge or having a set of trees that hides the road or shelters any noise from the road - things of that nature. We are getting down to all of the issues and wanting to deal with them and I don't necessarily see that we would be stepping away at

any point. We have gotten very quickly to the point we are at. We will get into the job very quickly and will continue that continuity of people, of faces, of understanding the issues, closing out the issues, through the entire life of the project. Also, going into the maintenance area, having the stewardship that we think is necessary to deliver the project means that we are going to need to keep in touch. There will be some embeddedness with the job in terms of community issues and things of that nature and I think we'll have a presence right through the entire life of the job.

Mrs NAPIER - So you're saying you can assist with the expansion of some of the car parks, but provision of toilets and camping facilities is not your job.

Mr CANTILLON - Toilets are being provided as part of the job.

Mrs NAPIER - That's not actually listed in the cost estimate that was provided.

Mr CANTILLON - I think it's called miscellaneous infrastructure, but, yes, it's a toilet. There are toilets at Julius River -

Mr FOONG - Yes, there's one toilet at Julius River Reserve. The intention is to obviously turn it into a double one. Then there will be three additional ones: one at Phantom Valley, another one at Tarkine and one more at Lake Chisholm. They are reasonably spaced out and the whole idea is to give all tourists that kind of visitor road experience, so roughly wherever they want they know they can actually go to the toilet. We will also be consolidating a lot of the facilities at Julius River in anticipation. There will be an increase in the number of visitors. The toilets are being doubled and we will be putting in additional woodfired barbecues, sheds and parking. We will be doing some of the actual track hardening. The only other track we will be putting in is a very short section of the Tarkine. Another is a track across the Arthur River. There used to be one footbridge there. So we will build one footbridge as well as about a kilometre of the roughly 15 km of eventual track that you see on the map there. Under the budget there is an item there for tourists facilities, which is capped at \$2.5 million. That's the money that will be spent on providing access roads and car parks as well as the facilities that I've just mentioned.

Mrs NAPIER - I accept that, and your feeling is that that will be adequate to cater for the significant increase of visitor rates that is identified in the report. It is quite a significant increase in visitors that is built into the report. That is a good news story in one sense, but if the prediction of the Moore report were achieved then our toilet infrastructure, parking and camping infrastructure is going to be significantly under capacity.

Mr FOONG - We are going to provide a minimum of 10 car parks in the facilities we are putting in and they will also have bus parking. They will all have two parking types, except at Kanunnah where there is only enough space for one and hopefully that will be sufficient. Obviously if there are going to be additional buses then probably someone will have to look at whether we would increase that. However, that is quite an increase. Given the number as predicted in the Moore report, that number of car parks along the whole route is quite a few. When you add up all the sites we are putting in 10 car parks. So you are looking at about 50 or so car parks, which is a fair bit.

Mrs NAPIER - The premise of the Moore report, the overnight stays, I presume they are in places like Smithton, Stanley, Wynyard and Burnie. However, it does not seem to take account of where I think the growth is going to be - grey nomads, overnight camping or camping for a week. I am a bit concerned that we are going to be well under in terms of facility development.

Mr GREEN - There are large camping areas at Arthur River on both sides of the river for both powered and unpowered sites.

Mrs NAPIER - That is a fair way away from Phantom Valley and Julius River, I would suggest.

Mr CANTILLON - We approached it via a group involving Forestry - the people who currently manage the sites. We have been speaking with Cradle Coast and Tourism Tasmanian and we got them all together. We even put out a brochure. One of the brochures that we put out was e-mailed ad nauseam to a number of people. It was about what we could do broadly at these locations and we were asking for feedback. The information we received, plus guidance by people like Tourism, is what informed the break-up of how the \$2.5 million would be spent. Things such as toilets were fundamental and that is why they feature in there. The number of car spots was seen as about the right balance for the area. Winnebagoes camp at a number of these facilities already, plus the formal and more diverse facilities further to the west.

Mr GERATHY - It is not as if an extra 100 000 people will turn up on day one. It will build up over time. As numbers build up then more facilities will be built as more businesses spring up. So it will take a little bit of time for the numbers to ramp up but there is no doubt that there will be increased demand from day one.

A north-west tourism forum was held at Strahan and we had a trade booth at it. We spoke to lots of tourism operators and they were very positive about the project. We used that venue to canvass some of the ideas in terms of visitor facilities and that is how we arrived at that list there. That was part of the consultation process. We spoke to the industry. They were very enthusiastic and said it made a lot of sense. They were the sites that those people were pointing to as well.

Mrs NAPIER - We have an increase of 215 000 visitor numbers with the Tarkine loop, compared to the east drive at 36 000 and the west loop at 21 000. Some 215 000 is a huge increase as compared to the east drive and west loop combination.

Mr CANTILLON - The report is based on the fact that these are what you could have if you have the infrastructure in place and when it is used to its maximum. When you have the sorts of varied experiences developing in the area, this is the potential that you may benefit.

Mrs NAPIER - I think the Felmingham report would certainly agree with that. In the analysis of the Tarkine loop relative to the west loop, which includes the South Arthur Drive and so on, what analysis has been made of the tourism drop-off as a function of the loop not being available, with the Tayateia Bridge having gone out?

Mr CANTILLON - For the purposes of our part of the project, the scope that we started with was that the Tarkine Road was the entire loop. There was a swag of prior analysis done that consolidated the investment, the \$23 million, as being good value for money and we haven't challenged those parameters of it or explored them.

Mrs NAPIER - So you've accepted the Moore Report and its analysis?

Mr CANTILLON - Yes. That's not any different to the way we would approach our general business. At some point you have to accept the materials that have been involved and move forward with those and develop them. Where we needed to test them we have, in a great amount of detail. We accepted that the road project is that entire length and there has been well-founded analysis there. That is the message that has come through the community from the consultation from Devonport right across to the far west so we thought that was the proposition we should be developing the project upon.

Mrs NAPIER - What weight did you give to the Cradle Coast tourism study that talked about using various entry points and smaller loops rather than the entire Tarkine loop?

Mr CANTILLON - I'm not sure whether 'weight' is the right word. We consulted very heavily with Cradle Coast, and we still are now through the likes of a steering committee with Phantom Valley. We have been to see Roger Jaensch a number of times, and Ian Waller, and they have been part of the project and the briefings as we have developed it. A key emphasis for them in past studies was the South Arthur Forest Drive and all those facilities there and that is a key part of the project. That is why there's a level of investment going on in the tourism infrastructure in those sections of the Tarkine road.

Mr BEST - The Moore Report is quite a comprehensive report and, as you've mentioned, there was quite a detailed consultation with the different tourism operators. We have also heard from the consultancy about the trade tables and the interest that has been generated from there, and also the community forums. I am interested in your take, though, on some of the significant findings of the report. I will quote - and there are two points:

'This is the single most significant tourism development available to the State after the introduction of the *Spirits of Tasmania*.'

Then the other one says:

'The Tarkine offers Tasmania the opportunity to recapture its pre-eminent position in nature-based tourism in the national market.'

Given the amount of consultation and study that has been done, you'd have to be pretty confident about those findings, wouldn't you?

Mr CANTILLON - We accept the prior work that has been done and, in terms of our own reconciliation of it, it is a groundswell of opinion out in the north-west, from as far as Devonport and going through to the west, that this is very necessary for the area. It is something that can be an icon that will rival similar facilities elsewhere in the State.

Mr BEST - In the context of the loops that have been talked about, the capacity exists, though, with this design, doesn't it, in some formats?

Mr CANTILLON - I think the loops are a key attractor because they give you options. It is a big drive, as you no doubt felt the last few days; your back is probably a bit sore from those gravel roads. To do the entire loop is about six hours, it's a long drive, and some people might like that if they want to get around the State very quickly. Me, personally, I'd want to stop off somewhere. But, necessarily, if you don't have time to see the entire section of the road, you can get off very quickly; you can do the Phantom Valley area and come back out; you can go from Phantom Valley, Tarkine Lookout, come across Tayatea and end up in Smithton. You don't have to go and see that further western area. Alternatively, you can come to Smithton and just do the coastal bit. There are lots of options. There are lots of varied experiences offered by the project and certainly the message that we're getting from the private operators is that's why it's so important. It offers attractions at various levels, from a small business operator that wants to come into discrete areas of the Tarkine, to potentially to someone who might want to operate hiring facilities at the Phantom Valley.

Mr BEST - In relation then to the campervan market, a lot of those are self-contained; they have their own commode et cetera. Is there any thought, perhaps, that at one of the three stops that have been mentioned there may be an empty station for any of those campervans?

Mr CANTILLON - There could be potentially. We haven't gone that far in -

Mr BEST - I think you should.

Mr CANTILLON - but we're still talking with groups and if we see that as something that's complementary and fundamental to the project, that's something that we're likely to provide.

Mr BEST - Thank you.

Mr GERATHY - The Moore report does recognise the fact that the Tarkine is a brand and the brand equity of the Tarkine is growing by the day; people talk about it. It's an interesting brand because it has developed on it's own, of course. What this is doing is leveraging that brand equity. In other words, there is a certain level of latent demand in there and this project is going to tap into that latent demand; that's the idea behind it.

Mr HALL - Following on from Brenton's question and, in a very general sense, Phil, if I could be the devil's advocate for a moment in talking about this whole tourism brand business, we've seen on the ground and we've seen from your report that we have a lot of small, pleasant ecotourism experiences, if you like, but do you think there's enough bang for the buck out of all this? Do you think that you ought to be having some sort of an iconic type of experience to really draw people? I can draw an analogy with the Meander Valley and parts of the upper Mersey Valley where there are lots of these small ecotourism experiences, however we've had problems attracting people, getting people there and getting people to stay for any length of time because there is not that one big iconic attraction for people to come and see.

Mr CANTILLON - Personally, and I think as a broader project team, and certainly the feedback that we've had from the broader community, I think that the success of this project in realising the benefits of the Moore report will depend on having a varied platform of experiences, from the boutique ecotourism to a Winnebago person pulling up, to having an icon-type attracter there, and certainly that's what has motivated Burnie City Council to consult with DIER. We think there's a real wisdom in it. It's something that's been very collaborative with the Burnie City Council. It has been accepted, I think, by Circular Head, Wynyard. We've spoken to Devonport, Cradle Coast; they're involved in this in terms of making Phantom Valley work because they really do see this as being an important element of the project. Not necessarily that the project is not about developing the experience but it's about developing the infrastructure to enable that experience to occur under appropriate statutory planning guidelines.

Mr HALL - Would you agree, though, that sometimes you need a hook to get people there?

Mr CANTILLON - Oh, definitely. As we heard today, the concept of the road project, particularly in the Phantom Valley, is about touching the Tarkine and if they are encouraged to touch the Tarkine then they will be encouraged to go deeper into other areas, not necessarily into the Tarkine reserves but to see more on the west coast. So, yes, we are looking at it being a hook.

Mr GERATHY - The Tarkine is a brand now and this is the beginning of the further development of that brand. So the hook is in the region. If you think about the Overland Track and Cradle Mountain, 20 or 30 years ago it was developing as a brand in itself and eventually it has turned into this huge brand that is a huge attractor. So it is the same here.

Mr HALL - Totally different experience, though, I might say.

Mr GERATHY - Absolutely and obviously it will be marketed differently and that is obviously a job for Tourism Tasmania. But looking at it as a marketer, it is a brand and people do know it. So this project is about enabling people to go and experience the Tarkine.

Mrs NAPIER - A further question linked to the Moore report and the rationale behind the full link road; the report refers to option 2 and option 3. The west and the east section only were done, without the intervening link. They assumed there would be no development of iconic status that would achieve a must-do tourism status. That might explain the huge difference between what is projected for the full Tarkine loop as compared to the two separate options. Just looking at the Phantom Valley, that is a fabulous area with the description we have had of the walks, the river activity and so on. I find it difficult to believe that an iconic status centre could not be developed in and around that area. I might similarly argue for some of what we saw in that Arthur loop area and so on. Were the comments that you were making about the importance of the full link road accepting that, if we did not have the full link road, we would not get any iconic development at Phantom Valley?

Mr CANTILLON - We are not necessarily offering any detailed view on it, but we have this analysis and certainly the consultation we have had with the widest possible range of groups, from February right through until now, is that, on balance, the best deal they can

provide for this project is to do the entire length and to get the entire gamut of potential facilities in place. If you do that then we interpret that you would have the greatest opportunity to achieve the outcomes sought by the Moore Consulting report.

Mrs NAPIER - In relation to option 1, the Tarkine loop road, the analysis says that in order for the projection of that growth in visitor numbers et cetera to occur then it would absolutely need private investment. I accept your answer that you are not in a position to comment on the Moore report. The Moore report just makes an amazing assumption that I do not think would hold up.

CHAIR - Mike Peterson has joined us.

MIKE PETERSON, FORESTRY TASMANIA, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

Mr PETERSON - I will make a few comments about the Moore report. Warren Moore, Greg Hudson and other associates were consultants of the Cradle Coast Authority. They had prepared a latent-demand analysis, which was part of the foundation for the Cradle Coast Authority's report on the Tarkine. The report that you've been presented with here is, in essence, a further work. It's a much more detailed study of specific options only. These consultants are very well known, very qualified and well respected. What has been said to us and the advice they have provided has been taken in very good faith by DIER and Forestry Tasmania.

The specific figures with respect to the breakdown between the east, west and the full link centre around what were identified as the key attractors of the Tarkine. Work that has been undertaken, and published in numerous studies before, identifies the Tarkine's key values as being the wilderness, rainforests, and to some extent the oceans and the sea. The concept of the loop road is to pull all those key attractors together, those key iconic elements where they build the icon. That is why the central link brings in the key rainforest and wilderness elements, which are not apparent with the east link or with the far west. That is a really important aspect to keep in mind.

Some initial research was done by Forestry Tasmania. One of our key people at the time was Jane Foley, general manager for tourism, who came from Tourism Tasmania and has a wealth of experience in tourism planning. When Jane first looked at Phantom Valley she identified particular issues, one of which was the backtracking issue and the potential for any significant development of a hub there having an impact on tourism visitation rates further to the west. There was some hesitancy about the concept of Phantom Valley at that time because people may just come in, get a touch of the Tarkine, but then they would go back out and maybe not even proceed further west; they may just head down the Wilderness Way. We thought that if we could link through to South Arthur Forest Drive and the west, and then the ocean, we could bring all these important elements together. A network of old forestry roads existed and the opportunity was to build a new bridge at Hilders and upgrade those roads to take us over a relatively short distance to South Arthur Forest Drive. What was identified then was that there are these loops within loops, within the bigger loop. The road is not just about building a road for the benefit of a drive. It is about linking experiences and key attractors which are being identified in the branding process. That is what the value is. The road is the basic infrastructure to bring all the attractors and link the attractors together. When you look at the broad scope of potential visitors, particularly those who are interested in this nature-based tourism component which is thought to, in time, maybe exceed 50 or 60 per cent of our market in Tasmania, a lot of those people are using hire-and-drive vehicle, self-drive components. Self-drive and hire-and-drive account for in excess of 90 per cent of the tourism market in Tasmania and even research that has been done by DIER in respect of southern Tasmania certainly showed that you needed sealed roads and you needed roads that if possible did loop to avoid the issue of backtracking which many visitors are not keen to do. Does that answer some of your questions?

Mrs NAPIER - Some.

CHAIR - Okay. Do you want to keep going for a moment, Sue?

Mrs NAPIER - I have done enough on that.

CHAIR - Okay. Pick up where you were, Phil.

Mr CANTILLON - The next section is really to talk a little bit about the project itself. We broke down the entire route into what we call homogenous sections. The reason we did that was to make sure that each section was unique and we understood the level of investment that was required in that area in terms of pavements or sealing or environmental issues, to make sure that we had the right balance, that we were not overinvesting or underinvesting, that we were picking up all of the issues and understanding exactly what they were and also having a better understanding of what the issues were in that area so that we could respond to the demands. An example of that was in sections 26 and 27. A short time ago the project was being developed on the basis that part of sections 25, 26 and 27 would have been 6-metre road widths. When we understood the breadth of issues and some of the environmental concerns on those sections of road, particularly 26 and 27, we said, 'Is there an opportunity to make those sections more tourism compliant and would 4-metre road sections be possible through there?' We then talked to people like Mike Peterson about future log traffic demands in that area and we spoke to the council at Circular Head, the mayor and the GM et cetera, 'Do you think that this challenges what has been suggested?' and they said no. We knew from work with the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts - DEWHA - that this was going to be an important issue for them so we said, 'Let's respond to it. Let's make it 4 metres'. Everyone agreed it was a sensible approach. There is a swag of further innovation that can probably come into the job as we go further into the depth of it.

But the nutshell was to understand what were the issues, the demands, the constraints and the opportunities in each of the areas and we are still doing that now.

Falling out of that is our next slide which is about the road widths. We took the opportunity to understand which could be the 4-metre sections with three-quarter metre shoulders, 750 mm. Six-metre sections needed to cater for a mixture of log traffic - not great log traffic volumes, to be honest, in the overall scheme of things - in fact, quite light.

Mr GREEN - What was it, 5 point something a day?

Mr PETERSON - I think the figure was 5.8.

Mr CANTILLON - Very small but necessarily, we thought, sufficient to warrant a 6-metre width there with half-metre shoulders, but certainly 4 metres was adequate.

In the next slide we can see the road cross-sections. It is very difficult; you will need to squint. Basically we asked for each of those homogenous sections what is the strength of the existing pavements that are in there, and so each one is designed on its own basis, some have just been sealed and nothing has happened to others - maybe some drainage, guidepost work or signage - and others are getting a 250 mm overlay of gravel before

sealing. It has given us the opportunity to drive a lot of innovation and cost savings into the job.

Mr HALL - Phil, you talked earlier about this 4-metre-width seal and so intuitively, I think you said, that would make people slow down. You talked about not having an arbitrary speed limit at this stage, is that correct?

Mr CANTILLON - I will just go back to your first statement. Having a 4-metre road cross-section alone is not the approach; the approach is a very integrated and very adaptive one. What we're looking for is harnessing the existing road alignment, that curvy, linear-type environment - the bendy roads - plus the nature of the traffic that is going on there and the ability to lower the travel speeds through there make a 4-metre cross-section satisfactory in those locations.

Mr HALL - I'm not arguing that fact, but every other road in Tasmania has a speed limit so why wouldn't you regulate it and say, 'This is the speed limit for this particular section'? I think you said earlier that you weren't going to do that.

Mr CANTILLON - It is something in the kitbag; it is not necessarily that we're gravitating to that in the first instance. We want to see what we can achieve by the design and construction in the existing road environment to achieve - we think it is much preferable to have a road alignment that is intuitive and provides all the visual cues for the drivers for slowing them down and operating within those travel speeds.

Mr HALL - I accept that, but sometimes you get, for example, overseas visitors, from even Asian countries - and I have seen them and you've seen them - who drive on some of our roads at inappropriate speeds; they don't quite understand the nature of the terrain.

Mr CANTILLON - I accept that, but that message may be potentially better communicated by advisory signs rather than regulatory signs. It's something that we are considering; we haven't made a decision on it. It's something that is in the kitbag for when we design and construct it, as well as load limits on sections of road.

Mr HALL - I am happy it's in the kitbag.

Mr BEST - On that - and I'd better be careful what I say here because I don't want to defame anyone - we had a fire on the west coast where a person went four-wheel driving and it was put to me that that person had some sort of ailment and needed medication and hadn't taken it with them. When their vehicle broke down they decided to set fire to the bush. You can't be responsible for people being ridiculous but there will be traffic going through and people ought to be encouraged to be sensible. If you're going to travel down a six-hour road and you are a diabetic, for example, you should take enough insulin to get you through the drive. I am just raising things like that because obviously different circumstances will arise, following on from what Mr Hall is talking about.

Mr CANTILLON - Certainly with DIER taking ownership of the road we would be managing that road in accordance with our wider maintenance regime that applies for the broader Tasmanian road network and all the things that happen there in terms of road inspections, people going down there for tree-clearing activities et cetera. I suppose the

project doesn't extend to a road safety campaign for things of that nature but certainly there would be an awareness of the environment you're driving in.

Mr BEST - Would there be a phone footprint at locations?

Mr CANTILLON - It is something that Gar has spoken about at length with Telstra, to try to establish what sort of mobile phone coverage we've got in that area. It certainly does exist. We were on the top of the Tarkine lookout. I was certainly on the phone if you stand in the right spot.

Mr HALL - Only just.

Mr CANTILLON - Only just, yes, but there are a number of spots. Even on the Grange Resources track they have got points marked.

Mr BEST - You could actually have that sensitively marked so people would know. Also, from what I'm gathering with the move into IT and information, people like to pull over and get online and have a little look on the 3G network and so forth to view different things.

Mr CANTILLON - Yes, that's certainly something we're considering for the project. You are in a remote area so it's about what sort of road safety provisions we can incorporate in the project at low cost.

Mr GREEN - One generic question on speeds again. It's all right to have them in the kit bag, but frankly I just don't accept that as a reasonable answer, given that we heard a lot yesterday about the fact that there would be very slow sections on this road. In fact, some construction of the road is around trees and incorporates slow sections. Why is it not possible or feasible to suggest to the committee that those tourist road sections will be slow by normal standards? Why can't you just say that?

CHAIR - And regulate it.

Mr GREEN - Yes. I'll give you an example. We went and had a look at one section of the road that has to be constructed; we went down that muddy track that exists already and got to a point where the track is going to intersect with it. Mike Peterson went to great lengths to tell us how he is going to build a road that will go around trees, which says to me that the trees will be there and the road will curve in and out of all those slowly and then meander on down. Is that not a slow section of road?

Mr CANTILLON - We're building the road to meet a design standard that is curvy linear but it's not necessarily about this. We want to have the right environment through there.

Mrs NAPIER - You want a visual alignment?

Mr CANTILLON - You want a visual alignment. It's very fundamental to the project, in building it to a public road standard, that it meets Austroads design standards for horizontal sight distance and for vertical sight distance. We don't necessarily see ourselves knocking down any trees. This is what Dion is about, and all the consultants we have.

Mrs NAPIER - You could have some of those dusk-to-dawn signs; they were quite effective.

Mr CANTILLON - Any of those impacts are picked up in the referral, but what we're looking at doing is having a road environment that provides the visual cues. Regulation of the road through enforcement measures is possible, may be considered and may be warranted in certain locations but -

Mr GREEN - I can't quite understand why you just won't or can't accept it. I will tell you why. I and others have said publicly that the road is to be designed as a tourist road and that many sections of it will be very slow. That's the reason I am asking the question. We heard yesterday that the road will be built as a tourist road, not as a logging road in certain sections. In other sections, I admit, it will be six versus four and all the rest of it, but those sections are to be built with one thing in mind - and that is tourism. Why wouldn't it be possible to open your kitbag now and tell the committee that, yes, it's very likely that they will be slow sections of road?

Mr CANTILLON - They will be built to be slow sections of road - and we've put it in the submission.

Mr GREEN - So they are not going to be built as 80 kph roads?

Mr CANTILLON - No.

Mr GREEN - So what are they going to be built as?

Mr CANTILLON - We have put in the submission that they will be designed to have an operating speed environment of around 40 to 50 kph. We are probably at cross-purposes; it is just about whether that warrants a regulatory speed limit.

Mr GREEN - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - Whether it needs a sign or not.

Mr CANTILLON - That's it.

Mr GREEN - I think it does.

Mr HALL - Given that, as Bryan said, it will be basically a tourist road, there is another dimension to it. Will this road - given the speeds that we hope traffic travel will travel at, regulated or unregulated - be suitable for cyclists, bearing in mind there is quite a market for cyclists these days?

Mr CANTILLON - As a public road it is suitable for all road users.

Mr HALL - From a safety point of view? Obviously that is the key issue here.

Mr CANTILLON - The key issue is knowing what sort of operating travel speed you want on the road and designing the road to have sufficient sight distance for those road speed environments. That means that someone driving a car should be able to see a cyclist

because they have sufficient sight distance for the speed they are travelling. We do not anticipate any issues with recreational cyclists on the route.

Mr GREEN - Regarding the negotiations with Grange Resources on the sections around 14, 15 and 12, into the Tarkine lookout and the falls, can you just explain to the committee how those discussions have been going? How many people would have the opportunity to see the Tarkine lookout as it exists at the moment, and whether a road actually exists there at the moment - there is a pipeline track going through there. So how have the negotiations been going with Grange? There has been a fair bit of publicity in the past.

Mr CANTILLON - The negotiations with Grange have been very amicable. We have met people from a detailed technical level up to Wayne Bould, the chief executive, and they have been very positive. There are still elements of detail we are working through but that is consistent with any project. There is a broad range of acceptance. We are working together in terms of accommodating two road crossings of the Grange track. There are certain requirements that they have. We are embodying them, negotiating where necessary, but they have been very amicable. We have not seen any particular issues. There are myriad roads already in that area, with infrastructure footprints relating to forestry roads, mineral resourcing activities, transmission lines and the like, and it is necessarily for us to get into that area. We have to travel those roads, so every time we go in there, as you did yesterday, we are travelling down the Grange Resources road.

Mr GREEN - That bridge that we crossed over coming out, is that on the pipeline track?

Mr CANTILLON - That is on the pipeline track.

Mr GREEN - That is a relatively new bridge?

Mr CANTILLON - Yes. A prior one was washed out in the 2007 floods. It was rebuilt recently by Van Ek Contracting.

Mr GREEN - What access at the moment is there to the trig point for the general public?

Mr PETERSON - There is no public access other than walking. At present you would need to cross the Arthur River somewhere between Farquhars Bridge, which collapsed in the same floods in August 2007, or at Hilders Crossing and walk on old forestry roads and then go bush for probably about 3 or 4 kilometres. Currently there is a licensed operator to Forestry Tasmania - Tarkine Trails. They take guided tours to the Tarkine Falls and the lookout. I think last year the number of clients was about 75 or 76. The previous three years they had averaged slightly fewer than 50 clients per year.

Mrs NAPIER - What is the crash factor or head-on collision factor on 4 metre-wide roads? Presumably that is a national figure you would need to give us because I do not think we have 4 metre-wide sealed roads in Tasmania, do we? I accept what you are saying about vertical and horizontal alignment but do we have a crash figure?

Mr CANTILLON - There are no factors that you aspire to, put it that way. It is basically designed to be a safe road.

Mrs NAPIER - Yes, but the pragmatist in me says that the obvious question my constituents are going to ask me is, 'You are only sealing 4 metres of the road, Sue, aren't there going to be more head-on crashes?' How do I answer them?

Mr CANTILLON - Because we are building a road to an accepted design standard that is a forgiving environment for drivers, that provides all the right visual cues, that is very sympathetic to the environmental overlays and complexities of the area.

Mrs NAPIER - So it is a visual answer?

Mr CANTILLON - Yes, and that is very important. Fundamentally it is about having the right visual cues. The visual cues in term of the driver but also if you turn it around the other way and look at it from an environmental point of view, some of those sections are going to be configured to provide a visual cue of the drivers approaching for wildlife. This is a very innovative job and this is going to create a legacy for Tasmania with the innovation that we are driving into this job. This has not been done before. You have had the Cradle Mountain and you have had Arthur River Road, but we are taking all the learnings from all of those jobs, putting them together, putting them into a melting pot, testing the good, bad and the ugly with all the experts and people who have a view on it and we are getting some really tangible measures. We have said that even if those measures are not right, this is going to be an adaptive approach and so part of that is having visual cues both for wildlife and for drivers.

Mrs NAPIER - I want to ask some questions about the devils and design but I am happy to wait until some of the evidence is presented so we do not double up on it.

Mr HALL - Phil, I accept the rationale for the 4-metre road width but my local government experience tells me that wherever we had narrow streets or narrow roads, there were always issues with those shoulders breaking away and therefore it caused our works managers and our works maintenance crews a lot of extra recurrent costs in repairs on those shoulders. Is that going to be an ongoing recurrent cost that we are going to have to carry supposedly because of that narrow road width?

Mr CANTILLON - As part of DIER's ownership, we are taking on the maintenance responsibility and necessarily there would be a regime that is consistent with our standards for maintaining those shoulders. There is a cost with it but that is just part of general road maintenance around the State. We do not see that as anything unique or particular. Yes, there is a cost in it to maintain, but also, when you think about it, with the volume of traffic that we anticipate on that road and the mix of the traffic, the tourism traffic, certainly there is greater log traffic which has the propensity to damage the shoulders. That is where you have wider pavements. That is why they are 6-metre sealed. Where there is the absence of that mix of heavy vehicles, that is where we think the 4-metre environment would work.

Mr HALL - Could I suggest to you that I have seen plenty of streets that have narrow seals on them and they do not have log traffic on them or heavy traffic but they still end up being a bigger maintenance issue than something wider. That is the point I wanted to make.

Mr BEST - I do not want to jump ahead, but I am interested in the road-kill mitigation. I am assuming most of that is the raised sections that you will be putting on the road. That is part of it, I suppose. How frequently do you have that?

Mr CANTILLON - I do not want to steal Dion's thunder.

Mr BEST - I will wait until you get to that bit then.

Mr LESTER - I am happy to answer it now.

CHAIR - Go ahead, Dion, thanks.

Mr LESTER - At the moment we are undertaking periods of study to look at existing road kill on the busiest sections of road but also the abundance of animals outside the road environment - headlight surveys. That information will inform specifically what measures occur where. Clearly on the western sections - sections 25, 26 and 27 - that area has a high density of devils and quolls so the specific measures that Phil mentioned earlier about reducing the road width have come about because of that. Elsewhere on the road, to use one of Phil's terms, we have a kitbag and we can pull out various measures depending on the further studies. The next round of road-kill monitoring and headlight surveys is occurring in January and that will tell us the hot spots. That is pre-construction. Both during construction and following construction the monitoring will continue so that we can adapt those responses if it comes through the data that there have been further hot spots develop. If we use them where they are needed to be used, I guess, is the short answer to that.

Mr BEST - Some of this mitigation, it appears to me, is likely to slow traffic down, keep people concentrating because there will be different visual treatments and sound.

Mr LESTER - Yes. There is a variety of cues. The road width is one; different surface treatments, both colour and ruffle strips and that sort of thing, is another. Signage is an option. Each of these cues, particularly the narrower road and allowing good sight distance and the ruffle strips, not only keeps the drivers driving slow but it alerts the animals. The key thing with road kill is that people can see the animals and the animals can hear and see people. The other thing is that when on the road we give them good opportunities to escape off the road, so they are not hemmed in through poor culvert design, steep banks or those sorts of things.

Mrs NAPIER - You have a number of bridges that also make this up. I was interested in the pricing that you suggested the bridges might be built for, with the Hilders Bridge at \$560 000; Lions, \$250 000, which is a smaller creek; Tayatea, which is considerable at \$450 000; Rapid Bridge, \$420 000. As a member of the Public Works Committee, we usually see millions next to the bridges rather than half a million. Why is it that you're going to be able to deliver significantly cheaper bridges for this project than you might for normal bridge development? I have said there will be a pavement difference but I would have thought there would still be some pylon construction issues that are going to be the same.

Mr FOONG - Yes. The first major reason is that it is a single-lane bridge and we'd travel on that typically on the Arthur River.

Mrs NAPIER - That's a pretty big bridge.

Mr FOONG - A long bridge, yes, and it will cost more than the figures are. As you go further upstream on the Arthur River the length of the bridges starts to reduce. I have checked the width with DIER's bridge section and they are happy with the 4.5 metre curb to curb for a single-lane bridge, which is much more generous than the Grange Bridge that we travelled on. For the pricing, I got on to at least one of the contractors who built the Grange Bridge. He didn't give me the price on the Grange Bridge but he gave me typically the last two bridges he had built in the area and they gave me a range of price per square metre. I looked at the length of the bridge they had to build, multiplied by the width, allowed a little bit extra for contingency for the curb and guard fence - the Grange Bridge didn't have that - and used a figure which is in the upper range of the range that he gave me and that figure comes out to the figure you see in front of you. The overall figure for each of them would be -

Mrs NAPIER - The overall figure would be \$2.5 million?

Mr FOONG - Yes.

Mr CANTILLON - Plus the approach roadworks are built into other elements of the estimate.

Mrs NAPIER - So with the 4.5 metre-wide bridge, like on the Kannunah Bridge, people like to walk onto the bridge, we all do, let alone cyclists going across, although I am not going to be a cyclist doing that track, that's for sure. Is it safe, then, if someone happens to be on the bridge when someone comes across with a car?

Mr FOONG - It's 4.5 metres, so passable for a car if it's travelling relatively slowly. Of course, as you noticed, as we crossed the Grange bridge we were taking it very carefully, and everyone did. We don't expect many pedestrians, let's face it, but the occasional one should still be okay. We think that the width there would be sufficient for a motorist who is going at a fairly slow speed.

Mrs NAPIER - Yes. Are you going to put a pathway on it at all?

Mr FOONG - Not at this stage, no.

Mrs NAPIER - But presumably guard rails?

Mr FOONG - There will be guardrails, yes. I envisage a fairly standard sort of guard fence will be put in there, commensurate with the bridge structure that will be put there. For all the crossings you see along the way we will actually be putting in our standard no-cut fences on the approaches and departures so that anyone taking the road perhaps a little bit too fast will be protected in that aspect. That would be done on all the culverts we crossed over the last two days.

Mrs NAPIER - So, it will be bare-boned bridging, basically.

Mr FOONG - Fairly bare-boned, yes.

Mrs NAPIER - You referred to the animal monitoring that was going to occur in January. I think that's by night count, isn't it, to see how many are on the road and so on. What impact is that likely to have on being able to respond to the Federal Government's request for more information? I understand they are particularly interested in the impact on the devil and on the rainforest. Please add to that if there are other areas they are asking about.

Mr LESTER - Monitoring has occurred once in October and November and is occurring again in the next stage in January. It involves daily road kill monitoring for three weeks and also headlight surveys. So we're counting the existing road kill, and the headlight survey is to get an indication of the abundance of animals in the area. Regarding the monitoring program, the Federal Government has not requested that information or does not need that information at this stage of the referral. The information requested relates to specifics about bridge designs and a few other issues. None of the questions that they have asked requires any further work at this stage, so we anticipate being able to respond to that request for further information by no later than 9-10 December.

Mrs NAPIER - So you expect to be able to respond to the request for additional information from the Federal department within -

Mr LESTER - Within two weeks.

Mrs NAPIER - Within a short time, and you don't think it will hold things up?

Mr LESTER - No.

Mr CANTILLON - The nature of the information requested, in a sense, is very basic. One of the questions is to clarify the length of the road - is it 131 or 140 km? Can you tell us about the bridges' construction and the materials and specifications? Can you tell us about erosion and sedimentation control measures being employed? So it's very routine and we'll get the information to them very quickly. The clock will start again and we'll get an answer, we expect, before Christmas.

Mr LESTER - It's important to note, with the method of assessment, that they won't necessarily be deciding a yes or no to the project progressing; they're making a decision on whether they need to undertake an assessment or not. So whether this has a potential to have a significant impact on a matter of national environmental significance, such as the Tassie devil. So it's purely a preliminary - do they want to have a closer look at it or not? We have said in our referral information that we think it is appropriate that they undertake an assessment. So they will make that decision as to whether they need to undertake the assessment, what type of assessment that will be -

Mr GREEN - So, they've got to make an assessment post your assessment; is that what you're saying?

Mrs NAPIER - They've got to make an assessment of whether they need an assessment.

Mr LESTER - That's exactly right. What happens with the documentation is that you refer the action, the project, to them and they'll make a determination as to whether they need

to have a closer look at it or not, whether it is a controlled action or not under their act. Routinely they might say no, so if you were conservative in your approach then you refer an action to them, just to make sure that, even if you think it's not going to have a major impact, they are comfortable with your approach. With this one, where there is a degree of uncertainty over some of the impacts, we would expect that they would like to undertake an environmental assessment of the project. They will make that decision. A short time after that they will issue guidelines in relation to the key things that they wish to look at and the level of further information that we might respond to. That would be things like the January road kill monitoring.

Mrs NAPIER - If you consider it is possible they might decide they do want further environmental assessment of key aspects of the project, are we crystal-ball gazing as to what kind of delay that is likely to involve?

Mr LESTER - We probably are, to be honest. I think it is highly probable that they will want to undertake an assessment. We certainly recommended that approach. Then they will determine the guidelines for that assessment. Some of the actions we are already undertaking, such as the road kill monitoring and the headlight surveys, were informed by the Vertebrate Carnivore Forum that we had in July of this year. That is, if you like, pre-empting the sort of information that we expect they would require. So we have at least some of the necessary actions in train as to the further information. One of the key things they will want to see is some of the management plans that we have mentioned throughout the documentation, about how we will manage the road environment in relation to the key flora and fauna issues - weeds, pests, fire and so on.

Mrs NAPIER - One of the issues we talked about a fair bit during the last couple of days is the Tassie devil issue. One of the points you have made is that most of the presence of Tassie devils can be demonstrated to be on the western loop and certainly on the Arthur Road, more so than on the east. There has certainly been considerable public concern about the Hilders Bridge that is going to be built and whether that might potentially increase the likelihood of Tassie devils with a disease crossing into the Tarkine area. There was evidence of a number in relation to another bridge that is likely to be built some 12 kilometres or so away. Also in summer there is the question of devils making crossings anyhow in low water.

Mr LESTER - There are a couple of things there that you have pointed out. We think there are higher densities on the western sections but the devils are spread throughout the project area. In relation to the Arthur River, we have had a look at the aerial photography around where Hilders Bridge will be built and there are in excess of 50 places where, during low water flow, so during the summer months, without having had an on-ground inspection but certainly based on the aerial photography, there is potential for devils to cross, so at the moment there is already significant potential for the devils to cross.

The second point is that there is no evidence to suggest that devils travel along roads. They are a forest- and woodland-dwelling animal. They do use runways within forests but there is certainly no evidence that we are aware of that devils travel along roads.

The third point: in relation to the devil facial tumour disease, the task force is collating the most recent data as we speak but with the 2008 data they found that the spread of the disease has slowed in its move west. It has not reached the Arthur River yet but it has

slowed. There are a couple of reasons why that could be. One that has been put forward is that there is a greater genetic diversity within the western devils, which means that they are nowhere near as susceptible. With all that we are still taking the decision with the Hilders Bridge that, once built, we will monitor that bridge for devils crossing or not. If it is demonstrated that they are using that as a frequent crossing point then there are options for retrofitting the surrounding road environment to prevent that. There is a trial currently being undertaken at the Dunalley Bridge, for example. That has been closed off and prevents devils crossing into the Forestier Peninsula down there. That is to stop them getting down because I think that is also a fairly contained disease-free population.

So, in summary, they can probably get across reasonably well. Do they travel on roads at night? We are not 100 per cent sure. We probably think not. If neither of those were the case, then we are going to keep an eye on the bridge. The only period that they would probably use it would be during high water flows. Obviously during winter they cannot use those 50-odd crossing points. Devils can swim too but only short distances and they really need to be motivated. But we are going to monitor the bridge.

Mrs NAPIER - What does a motivated devil look like?

Mr LESTER - I think a young lady on the other side of the stream, a young female devil.

Laughter.

Mr LESTER - We are not just missing the issue. A number of factors there would tend to suggest, in addition to the genetic diversity of the west coast, it is a rapidly evolving field. There has been money invested by the State Government into the task force and we are certainly engaged with the task force and will continue to try to have the most available information and data to make our decisions in relation to this. I think one of the key things is that monitoring of the bridge to ensure that if all the other things turn out not to be valid, then we have the option to shut that off to devil traffic.

Mrs NAPIER - You could put cameras up there to monitor them.

Mr LESTER - It could be as simple as to put a camera there, exactly right.

Mrs NAPIER - Somewhere in this submission there is a reference to another bridge in the vicinity, I am pretty sure.

Mr LESTER - There was mention of Farquhars Bridge, which is going to be built further downstream.

Mr PETERSON - Upstream.

Mr LESTER - Yes. There is another bridge over the Arthur River, which we cross which is the Pipeline Bridge but that is much further west.

Mrs NAPIER - It might have been a reference to that. I just could not find it again.

Mr CANTILLON - The other point I was going to make too is that DIER responding to DEWHA's requirements is business as usual. A very large suite of projects usually goes

before the DEWHA. They are very complex jobs. With the quarter billion dollar Brighton bypass transport hub we went through similar processes. They were controlled actions, similar to probably what this will become. We were able to respond to that and get their approval to within a couple of months with a suite of agreed mitigation measures that were embodied in the management plan. So this is business as usual for us. We do not see any particular issues with it.

Mr LESTER - It is very common, in my experience and in DIER's experience, for DEWHA to request further information at this early stage. They have a period of 20 business days to make a decision on sometimes very complex projects as to whether to assess it or not and so the information request comes to assist them, obviously, in making their decision. I guess I should point out that throughout the process we have engaged heavily with DEWHA. We have had two field visits, one quite early, a number of months ago, and then once we had submitted the referral information, we had representatives from DEWHA down, approximately two weeks ago, to talk through the issues and view various aspects of the job for a second time.

Mr CANTILLON - To look at the potential hot spots as well.

Mr LESTER - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - That brings me back to the issue that Mr Green was talking about before and that is whether the contract gets let in three parts or whether it gets let as one full part. I wonder if we can revisit that issue. What advantages or disadvantages are there to letting it as one as compared to three given that there is about a two- or a three-year gap for stage 3?

Mr CANTILLON - There is no disadvantage to having a single contract. If anything, the benefit from having it is that you will ensure that the goals and aspirations that are sought for the entire route occur, through having one contractor that is fully familiar with all the issues from end of the job to the other.

In terms of timing, the procurement mechanism we are looking at is exactly the same as what we have done with Brighton where we are going out there, meeting people, understanding the issues better and responding. While we are responding to DEWHA we are building up our knowledge base, we are building up management plans, we are understanding the mitigations, doing further versions of them, doing any early works that we can.

At face value, DEWHA has said to us very clearly right from the very beginning, and we challenged it a couple of times, this is one referral for the entire job. They are the rules of engagement, so we have stuck with that. In the same breath, what we are aspiring to is that through a strong relationship with them, a very close engagement, we will be able to undertake early works in areas where we can. An example of that at the moment is the bridge beams - the bridge beams at Tayatea that you saw the other day. We want to take them out because we want to do some testing on them to see whether we can reuse them in the bridge, which saves us a few more dollars, and make sure the project is built within the \$23 million. We have been negotiating for that purpose. There may be other elements of it. If we can give them confidence that we have good control and a good understanding of the mitigation measures that are required, they may be prepared to

release it. Remember this project is being built in stages to enable us to start very quickly on the sections. It is a large job to build in two years; it is 140 kilometres. We can start west of Tayatea Bridge. If we get DEWHA's consent, we will start concurrently in the first 18 months on the Hilders Road section back to Myalla and we'll do the middle bit within the last 12 months. The reason we are doing the middle bit in the last 12 months is to get access to it because if we have a connection either side it makes it easier to build the bit in the middle. It also provides more time just in case DEWHA, from their Federal approvals processes, need more time with that middle section as opposed to the far-eastern and far-western sections. We are trying to be very adaptive in our procurement, in our contracting and we are working on a number of fronts to get out there as soon as we can and not be encumbered.

Mrs NAPIER - You mentioned salvaging the beams, and there is a reference there to \$120 000 for the salvaging of the beams in the Tayatea Bridge. Is that what it will cost to salvage and fix them? If they are not fixable, what does that push the cost of your bridge up to?

Mr PETERSON - The purpose of this is really to identify if those beams can be used again. One of them appears to have some slight damage and there was a thought that we may be able to use that on another site, in particular the Rapid River Bridge site which is a 20-metre span and these are 20-metre sections. That was one of the purposes of trying to get the decks out and test them. If the three decks are found to be sound, ideally we would just rebuild the structure as it was and put in additional foundation strengthening, which will ensure its strength for a 1 000-year flood schedule. The \$100 000 is the competitive tendering or the quotes that we received for that particular aspect of the job, to get the decks out, turn them over, test them, remove the pier that has been damaged and rolled over. It is a fairly large lump of concrete that has to be removed from the site. The works that are entailed in doing that will also be preparatory for the re-establishment and reconstruction of the bridge.

Mr CANTILLON - There's plenty of swings and roundabouts in the jobs. If you are incurring costs here - as I said, it was Arthur River Road going from 6 to 4 metres that saved us -

Mrs NAPIER - That helped you get it inside the \$25 million?

Mr CANTILLON - No. There is significant contingency in there and there is cost escalation as well. We think there is every opportunity for us with this procurement mechanism we are doing. Essentially we are doing only that which we need to do to deliver the job. We are not going to design the billyo out of it because we do not need to. We want a contractor who can do the work like we used to do it about 20 years ago - we are out there, we have good construction controls, we have minimum design information, we know where all the hot spots are and with those construction controls we are building those sections. We are spending a lot of money on the environmental side of it and you will see \$500 000 in there - and that is a fair sum of money out of the \$23 million - for the basic environmental mitigation measures. That is on top of all the consultant work, Dion's time and other subconsultant's time buried in it generally, there is another \$500 000 for environmental mitigation measures.

Mrs NAPIER - I have just noticed that tourist infrastructure facilities, \$2.5 million?

Mr CANTILLON - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - Have you a breakdown of that for what gets spent where, roughly?

Mr CANTILLON - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - Could I ask for a copy for the committee - through you, Mr Chairman?

Mr CANTILLON - Sure.

Mr BEST - Just further, I did ask a question before about the road kill mitigation: you mentioned there would be colouring of the road. What sort of things have you thought there or what is the consensus?

Mr LESTER - There is a variety of options available to us and changing the colour of the road pavement from something darker to something lighter basically just makes the animals stand out. It is a relatively easy thing to do - because devils are black, you have a light coloured road pavement and it makes them stand out a lot more to drivers. Everything we are doing is about slowing the traffic, improving what people can see and what animals can see and giving the animals an opportunity to get off the road when they need to and that is the fundamental thing. For each of those mitigation measures that is the underlying principle, which is well established and well tested.

For example, a recent study showed that if you reduce road traffic speed from 100 kph to 80 kph then you see a 50 per cent decrease in road kill. We will not even be doing 80 kph on most of this road; it is going to be more of the order of 40 kph in large sections. The same study found that negligible road kill will occur when you are going 40 kph and the other important point is that the majority of the traffic on this road will be travelling during daylight hours and you do not see very many animals on the road during daylight hours.

Mr BEST - Will you have any restrictions - or any sort of encouragement, I am not sure what exactly - about when vehicles should be on the road. It is a difficult thing, I guess.

Mr LESTER - I do not think we can restrict when people do or do not go on a public road, but obviously people will want to finish the touring route and end up somewhere for their dinner, so that will dictate that. It does not mean exclusively there will be no traffic during the evenings or at dawn and dusk, but certainly the large percentage of the traffic we would expect, which will be tourist based, will be during typical daylight hours.

Mr BEST - If you are a tourist and you are thinking about the trip along this road, if you are aware that there is going to be these quite lengthy slow sections, I do not imagine someone from another country, for example, wanting to drive 20 kph or 40 kph at 10 o'clock at night. It is just commonsense, isn't it, that if you are going to make an adventure or an experience that you will think about the trip that you are engaging upon.

Mr LESTER - Yes, absolutely and one of the key things with the loops it gives people an out. They are not stuck on the 134 kilometres once you start, you have various options, so if someone starts at lunchtime they will get to Phantom Valley and they will say, 'All

right, we'll have to go out through Tayatea Bridge rather than do the whole route' so there are opportunities for that.

Mr CANTILLON - We will have signage. We will actually tell them that if they go that way it is going to take -

Mr BEST - It is going to take this long.

Mr CANTILLON - Yes.

Mr BEST - So there is your option head back that way. The other thing I was going to mention to you - I see you have it up there -

Mr GERATHY - Yes. It is a bit hard to see but you have it in your pack there. For the entire route we are looking at six hours of just solid driving which no-one is going to do. As you would have found out, you come out pretty wrung out by the end of that so that is where the idea of doing it over several days is coming from and we have some time estimates there of the two inner loops. They are manageable. That is a good outing when we think about it, by the time you have lunch somewhere and stop at a few locations it is a good experience.

Mr BEST - I think you mentioned earlier, Mr Cantillon, that the way you are approaching this project is that you are looking at the things that have been successful in different areas and things that haven't, so you are applying a lot of experience. I guess you're looking outside the State too, I imagine at other sections of tourism roads, et cetera, where there's that engagement of wildlife and so forth. Is it fair to say that you have an attitude of wanting to make this really first class, this whole project, in the context of a comparison to - I'm not sure what you might be comparing it to but -

Mr CANTILLON - We are using the word 'legacy project'. We have an exceptional team really. To get to where we are as quickly as we are and as comprehensively with all the consultation that we've done and to be able to present it as comprehensively, hopefully - cross our fingers - as we are to you means that a lot of work has been done and we envisage there are still more challenges there but we're getting through them. We are responding to any further issues. I was out with Richard Summers yesterday and I'd already identified about 13 issues. I said, 'Okay, this is what I've got.' He said, 'I've got one more for you.' We spoke about it and resolved it, either through a commitment or through just him having a better understanding of the process that we're going through.

The key to the success of this project will be the communication and that's why we've got it as an outcome. We were gobsmacked when we first got this project that close to 90 per cent of the Tarkine Road is already out there in some shape or form. That is an enormous opportunity to be had and to leverage off and that's what we're doing, but we need to communicate how we are using that gift, that benefit, to make sure that we're doing it responsibly. That's where we want to go. As Dion said before, we've had - we brought DEWHA in about three times, we were looking at trying to bring the secretary down early in the new calendar year just to see it. If they see it and they understand it they've got a better understanding of it and they don't fear it.

In terms of the approvals process, we got through the Brighton approvals process - a very complex job - in just a couple of months. If we have the right level of engagement, they see that we're honouring our commitments, we're dealing with the issues, we'd like to think that we can get through a quicker process. But it's all about credibility and being seen to be doing the right thing and picking up on the issues.

Mr BEST - Come up with the right treatments and design and those sorts of things.

MR LESTER - Yes, absolutely. Just to build on what Phil said, there are benefits for this project but there will be a number of benefits that come out more broadly for road design or broadly for mitigation - just adding to the information about road kill, about devils and those sorts of things. We are doing a significant amount of research and study; that's not just before the project, it's beyond. So, there'll be lessons that come out of it and there'll be ongoing learnings from that which can be applied and there are certainly opportunities in the future for postgraduate research into the adaptive management regimes and the study of what has occurred; okay, this is what we did, these are the outcomes. So, there is a lot of broad benefit beyond just building a really good road with good mitigation.

Mr BEST - Finally, that's very important because having been down the west coast about a week-and-a-half ago, I found it interesting listening to people travelling from Hobart on the Lyell Highway about the amount of road kill. I don't really travel it that much because I'm usually heading that way from here, but hopefully there will be some good outcomes here that you might be able to apply elsewhere.

Mr LESTER - Absolutely. It's been demonstrated elsewhere in the State that you can retrofit and you can have a significant difference. The Cradle Mountain road is a good example where there was no effort made initially when that was built to manage for road kill and it proved to cause a significant impact, particularly on the local quoll population. They subsequently went back and put in things like chicanes, which is just another method of slowing traffic down; they put opportunities for the animals to escape off the road, basically just the table drains, and within an approximately two-year period they saw a 50 per cent increase in the local quoll population. While we're endeavouring to do the most we possibly can prior to, the adaptive management that we're proposing gives us ongoing opportunities to continually improve the outcomes if the assumptions we have made initially have proven to be slightly erroneous.

CHAIR - Can I just go to something, Phil, a little distance from this, but nonetheless we drove past it to get here, and that is the Dismal Swamp. Is that being factored in to the experience? The returns from that project haven't been what was projected, but the drive from Smithton out to Marrawah gives the opportunity to link that in. Is that in any way part of the marketing about the loop process that is going on here?

Mr CANTILLON - From the project's point of view, it is not part of its bailiwick, but in terms of the consultation with tourism operators and Tourism Tasmania, it is probably something that does get discussed in those wider sessions. More detail of that is relating to FT, and Mike you might want to make a comment on that.

Mr PETERSON - The concept of the loop road was to bring a broad number of experience, site and attractors and link them together. In the western loop there are a number of attractors already, one of which is Dismal Swamp, and also Edge of the World.

Obviously there should be some benefits for Dismal Swamp, as there will be for all the other sites as well - Stanley, Smithton, Arthur River and places like that will all benefit potentially from significant increases in tourism traffic. Hopefully it will improve the viability and facility of Dismal Swamp

CHAIR - The submission mentions the \$100 000 provided by DIER to the Burnie City Council for a marketing strategy. When will expenditure be authorised as against that allocation or has it already started?

Mr CANTILLON - We have draft contracts currently with the Burnie City Council for them to execute, so they will come back to us and we formally execute them. But, in effect, the agreement has been authorised by government. The contractual arrangements are currently being exchanged.

CHAIR - This proposal hasn't yet been approved, when can Burnie City Council start spending the \$100 000 on the promotion component?

Mr CANTILLON - Essentially the contract provides for them to commence that work now and, as I said, we are just exchanging the executed copies of it. It provides them with the ability to undertake that work now.

CHAIR - I suppose I could simply make the observation that that might be the cart before the horse, the \$100 000 that they can spend and this project isn't even approved yet.

Mr CANTILLON - No, many months ago it was agreed formally with the council to provide them the \$100 000. The process we went through was to identify the detail of how that money would be spent and the governance arrangements that would apply to the expenditure of that money. In other words, when we say the 'governance arrangements', are there very clear outcomes? We wanted a steering committee - Cradle Coast, Tourism Tasmania, FT - and we wanted a clear consensus on the outcomes, the deliverables and the timings. We had our first meeting and we agreed those particulars. Those particulars then formed the basis of the funding agreement, which is now in the contracts that are being exchanged.

Mr GREEN - The Chair is making the point that you have spent \$100 000 of the \$23 million, effectively, without the project being approved.

Mr CANTILLON - Sorry, I missed that point.

Mr GREEN - So it is part of the preparatory work effectively?

Mr CANTILLON - Yes, that is how we have viewed it.

CHAIR - Part of that that I see in the submission, I accept that an area development plan can be developed without necessarily this project - an area development plan, yes, but particularly for Burnie City Council's interests the Phantom Valley area has been identified as particularly important to the Burnie area because of the loop nature and one-day trip component.

Mr CANTILLON - I suppose what we have seen is that it is not just important to Burnie; I think Phantom Valley is important to a wider area than just the Burnie City Council. It extends even to Devonport and other areas. We are spending money on the project now in a development sense by being here and presenting this to you and going through environmental approvals. We see the success of this project is through having the communication and engagement in terms of Phantom Valley. In a sense it is chicken and egg. We have discussed what we think are the infrastructure requirements for it but you have to necessarily have that to keep the momentum with the tourism operators and associations. Here is DIER on one hand developing the infrastructure, subject to certain approvals, and here is the goal to be kicked by developing Phantom Valley. You are leapfrogging from that to that position and what we are trying to do is to say, 'Okay, keep going', so that when we have the road built over the next two years and it is being progressively released in sections, you have tourism operators and developers who have the appetite to develop it because they have a better understanding of what Phantom Valley is going to deliver. If we don't start that work now, if we waited until we had all the approvals in place - it is not something that is subject to an environmental approval, but it is very critical to the debate and the community in terms of what the project is going to achieve.

Short adjournment.

CHAIR - Okay, we will proceed.

Mr CANTILLON - The look we want is with vegetation on the side, clear sight distances, and a curvilinear-type of environment to slow you down. There are a couple of key bridges being built. You might recall Rapid River. That is a location where we might need to undertake some temporary works to keep the bridge going while we are building the alternative alignment. The key bridges being reconstructed are Hilders and Tayatea, both of which have been destroyed by floods. The project also provides for replacing a pedestrian bridge at Julius River. We walked over that and also one crossing of the Arthur River at Phantom Valley, which we spoke of today.

We spoke about the early contractor involvement approach. It is one that will give us the greatest flexibility in the delivery of the project. It has been approved by the Department of Treasury and Finance and it will give us the greatest flexibility to achieve those outcomes sought by the project. The key benefits are that the contractual arrangements will have the greatest flexibility. We can work collaboratively with the contractor at early stages of the project and with other key stakeholders. It provides the opportunity to continue to improve the design outcomes and to continually improve the construction as we proceed through the approvals processes. It allows the project to be tendered early, subject to approvals et cetera. While concurrently we are going through a project approvals process it provides for greater flexibility with staging and effective management of the mitigation measures. The key thing about the ECI is that it demystifies the pricing arrangements. If you try to get a contractor to price that as it is then it will not be \$23 million, but if you can get in close-quarter negotiations, you describe it, he understands the route, he knows the issues, he knows the risks with the job, he knows how we are mitigating and he knows the risk profile - what DIER is taking and what the contractors are expected to take - then we can get more effective pricing outcomes. We have seen that already on the Brighton bypass. We think it is going to provide enormous benefits for undertaking the Tarkine job, going from a contracting

strategy that has worked on a \$250 million job to a contracting strategy on a \$23 million job.

Mr LESTER - As is typical practice with nearly all DIER road projects, apart from the most minor, we have undertaken background surveys in relation to flora and fauna and Aboriginal and cultural heritage. There have been some difficulties in gaining access to some of the sections, notably those east of the lines because of the flooding. Sections 10 and 15 require a track cutter to cut a survey line. So they are gaps at the moment in the level of survey. However, each of the practitioners has provided some advice on the level of risk associated with finding anything in those areas. We hope to be in a position next month to complete those information gaps for each of the surveys.

The flora and fauna survey results outlined in the submission highlighted quite a number of species. That was based on the chance of occurring but a number of those are spring flowering species. When we were preparing that submission the spring surveys had not occurred. They now have so I can confidently tell you that the western section, which is 25, 26 and 27, tends to be where the main areas of threatened flora species potentially would occur. There were only two orchid species found and there is a very large population of those two orchid species 6 metres off the edge of the road on section 27, so we are not anticipating any impact on that large population of orchids.

A couple of plants have colonised the table drain. Some of these species tend to like areas of disturbance, so the odd plant that has popped up there but they are not in their natural environment. We would expect there to be very minor impact on those orchid species. Similarly, with the north-west heath, the further spring survey occurred two weeks ago for that. Again we have found large populations and they are adjacent to those existing sections. As you will recall from viewing those sections - 24, 25, 26 and 27 - we are sealing well within the existing road environment. We have in excess of a 6-metre wide gravel area now and we are bringing that into 4 metres, so only very minor impact is expected on those threatened species.

There is potential for a number of threatened lichen species to occur. We are undertaking further consultation with a lichenologist early next month to determine the appropriate management for those. They are located typically around those middle sections - and that should read December 2009, not December 2010. We are expecting to complete the ground surveys for the flora early next month.

We have spent a little bit of time talking about the Tasmanian devil and the quoll and the road kill mitigation measures associated with both those species. The only thing I would add in relation to that is that, before and during construction, two more road kill surveys and headlight surveys are planned for January and then in April, which is really to check the management regime and look at things around construction. But it does not finish there. We will then develop the appropriate measurement of things close to the construction. That will be critically informed by our engagement with DEWHA.

I have just listed some of the other species that occur in the area. Probably most noteworthy, there are a number of bird species - the wedge-tailed eagle, grey goshawk and the kingfisher - that are known to occur in the general area. There has been one eagle nest search and that did not determine any nests within 500 metres of the road. Following the ground survey, a number of other potential habitat areas have been

highlighted. We will extend that survey and that will occur after their breeding season, which is in March. Similarly, with the grey goshawk no nests were found within the vicinity of the road but we are taking quite a precautionary approach and so we will inspect those key habitat areas in detail again early next year to ensure there is no disturbance to any nests. The kingfisher speaks for itself. There is potential habitat on the river banks and some of the bridge crossings. So we will need to take particular due care during the construction of the bridges. It is just a case of ensuring that they are not nesting in those particular areas when we are constructing the bridges.

The giant freshwater lobster does have the potential to occur in these areas. The key thing is to ensure that those areas where there is going to be disturbance to waterways is searched by an appropriate person with a permit to move any lobsters on and that we design any culverts to be lobster-friendly. That is something DIER has done a number of times through many jobs on the north-west coast. There is not anything particularly special about that. It is core business when designing roads in Tasmania's north-west.

The Marrawah skipper - a caterpillar and butterfly - is fairly unlikely to occur but just to be absolutely certain the habitat areas along 26 and 27 will be inspected preconstruction to make sure there is no disturbance.

Mrs NAPIER - It has been raised with me that maybe there ought to be some reserves identified where lobsters are more likely to be found relative to reducing forestry activity. Are the realignments of this road and the reserves that are now going to be enhanced through the multiple-use forests likely to improve some of the reserve areas for giant lobsters?

Mr LESTER - That is probably a forestry question. We will put mitigation measures in where we have crossings and we will ensure that there is certainly no impact to the species through the construction of those crossing and then subsequent ongoing management.

Mr PETERSON - The giant freshwater lobster is managed in multiple-use forests under the Forest Practices Code and we have specific descriptions in place on advice from the Forest Practices Authority and the Threatened Species Unit with respect to management of the giant freshwater crayfish. So for all of our existing roads we already have mitigation measures in place in terms of sedimentation control into existing streams and the like. I imagine that will happen in the design process with this. In the sections of new construction, I don't believe there are any stream crossings in which there would be suitable habitat for the giant freshwater crayfish. They tend to be very minor water courses. We're looking at the higher elevation areas, those very minor streams. There may be some breeding areas there but my understanding from experts whom I've spoken to in the past suggests that the likelihood of giant freshwater crayfish in those new sections is probably quite low - very remote.

Mr LESTER - It's a very important issue but it's a management issue in relation to that species. There has been a lot of work done by DIER elsewhere in the State about what appropriate construction control measures are there and also how best to design stream crossings. There has been a lot of work done on that.

Mrs NAPIER - That wedge-tailed eagle we saw today in the sky at Phantom Valley, how close was that to the spot that we were on?

Mr LESTER - The nest site currently cannot be within 500 metres but we are extending that search area to ensure that it's not.

Mrs NAPIER - It was coming from the other side of the river.

Mr GREEN - How close is Phantom Peak to the new section of the road because it was over towards Phantom Peak?

Mr PETERSON - The eagles roam over a very large area.

Mrs NAPIER - Yes, but I wondered if we could identify where the nest was for that wedge-tailed eagle that was flying around near the river towards Phantom Peak.

Mr PETERSON - There has been a search of the road corridor from the Meunna-Keith River junction, which is the start of section 2, right through to section 15 or 16 and no eagle nests were found within the 500-metre radius of the road, which was the prescription that Forestry Tasmania works to on advice from the Forestry Practices Authority. There has been an additional search of the Phantom Valley area in particular, a much more extensive area including Phantom Peak. I think that has been searched to a kilometre radius from the precinct. So I've identified the possible precinct of activity for any tourism development and then extended that out and that has been recently searched. It was searched just prior to the August deadline for eagle nest searches and no nests were found. I've often seen them but we know of several other nest sites within four or five kilometres but we haven't identified any within the precinct of the development.

Mr LESTER - Similarly with the flora and fauna, we've had some difficulties getting into some of those key middle sections. From an Aboriginal cultural heritage point of view there have been two areas of interest highlighted. One is on the west coast, the porcelanite Aboriginal stone quarry complex, but that's an existing site. Basically, the road goes through the middle of them. It's at Beckett Creek. Again, because we're sealing the existing road within the footprint there's going to be no impact, but we need to manage that appropriately through exclusion areas and such things.

Also, on one of the eastern sections there is an area where there is potential for archaeological sensitivity. What that means is that the conditions there were conducive to occupation in some form but the ground cover didn't allow a detailed inspection. So what is proposed there is a strategy of subsurface investigations to determine whether there is anything subsurface or not. At the moment nothing has been found there but the next stage is that we will develop a subsurface testing methodology, undertake some test bits and that will determine whether there are any Aboriginal relics there. Currently there are no known sites impacted by the road works but that may change pending further investigations on that section too.

Mrs NAPIER - Mind you, there were some protests on the Brighton highway today about Aboriginal heritage!

Mr HALL - Dion, we have had that said to us before, as Mrs Napier, quite rightly said, with the Brighton Bypass, Meander Pipelines and everything else. So there is probably a likelihood. Would you suggest that there might well be some claims, which could hold up or even cause some rerouting of the project? Is that possible do you think?

Mr LESTER - Anything is possible. Talking with a specialist, the main concern that he had in relation to Aboriginal issues for this job was ensuring community expectations were met in relation to the existing sites on 25 rather than the uncertainty associated with section 2. However, until the subsurface investigations occur, we cannot say with certainty what we are dealing with there. It may involve some further investigations and a permit to destroy that site or, as you have said, some route realignment. But until we undertake other investigations we cannot say. The subsurface investigations will be occurring early in the New Year and can follow on relatively soon after that. We have accounted for that within the time frames to allow for that eventuality.

Mr HALL - Have you had Aboriginal Heritage officers on-site at this stage?

Mr LESTER - Yes. We have had an Aboriginal Heritage officer, who is a representative of the community, and also a prehistorian archaeologist, who have viewed those areas. Both those individuals have extensive experience both in linear infrastructure but also in dealing with subsurface investigations.

Mr HALL - Yes and that is where some of the problems seem to arise, in the subsurface issues.

Mr LESTER - Briefly, on historic heritage, there are no major concerns or listed sites. There are things like the Balfour Track and the sawmill, which are remnants from the 1940s and 1950s. But, again, there is very little from European historical point of view. In fact there is basically zero from the European heritage that is present and/or likely to be impacted.

We have spoken a little bit about the environmental approvals. I do not think there is much more to be said on the EPBC Act as we spoke at length on it. As I mentioned a few minutes ago, there will be a requirement to prepare a permit to take under State legislation for a small number of those orchids that have colonised the table drains, and that is pretty much it.

Again, we have spoken about the Aboriginal Relics Act. At this stage there is no need for permitting associated with that. The subsurface investigation will determine with certainty whether we do need to have a permit to interfere with an Aboriginal site. Because some parts of the deviation are within State forests, there will need to be the requirement to prepare a forest practice plan. But the extensive work that has already been undertaken will well inform that. The only thing that is holding that up is finalising the eagle nest survey and that cannot occur until after the breeding season, which is February of next year. So there will be an extension to the eagle nest survey completed in March and then that will inform both the forest practice plan and also the reserve activity assessment, which is just a method of informing Parks that you are going to undertake some work in their areas. That applies to the Arthur Pieman Conservation Area.

As Phil mentioned earlier on, we have two DAs required - very minor works dealing with small sections of the road that are new roadworks in Waratah, Wynyard and Circular Head municipality - and they will be submitted later this year with those councils. They are well aware they are coming and the details associated with them.

Mrs NAPIER - Do you anticipate that the Federal Government is likely to take issue with the new sections of road that go through rainforests, acknowledging that it is already an area in which selective species are being harvested?

Mr LESTER - Rainforests in a general sense?

Mrs NAPIER - Yes.

Mr LESTER - The Federal Government's brief for their assessment is only contained to matters of national environmental significance. So on this job it is one orchid species, the Tasmanian devil, the spotted quoll, the crayfish and those matters. That is the extent of their assessment. They have certainly taken an interest in those areas of the road that go through the reserve that was put aside as part of the RFA amendment of the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement, however, at this stage they have no statutory role in the assessment of rainforests. If, through the national heritage listing that has been put forward, that becomes listed then they will certainly be interested in looking at the specific values in that reserve and how that relates to the road.

Mrs NAPIER - That was that new section 15 and section 16?

Mr LESTER - No, that will be section 10. But at this stage there is no known triggers within that section that require the Federal Government's DEWHA approval.

Mr PETERSON - Section 10 is the only section of new road that is within the forest reserve. I think it is 2.8 kilometres or thereabouts and interpretation of aerial photos -

Mrs NAPIER - That is that earlier section we saw today and that is not the rainforest section we saw yesterday?

Mr PETERSON - No. The rainforest section you saw yesterday is section 15. Not all of section 15 is rainforest but a high proportion of it is and that is in multiple use forest outside the forest reserve. As a consequence of that, there is agreement by Forestry Tasmania to increase the area of informal reserves in that vicinity. We estimated that the road would lead to canopy disturbance of about 6-7 hectares and Forestry Tasmania has agreed to offset that and in a large part for any other disturbance along the road to the tune of about 650-700 hectares of new reserve.

About 60 per cent of section 10 of the proposed alignment will be going through rainforest, but it is very typical of the rainforest in that area. In terms of the Regional Forest Agreement, rainforest is very well reserved in terms of the CAR requirements, that is the comprehensive requirements for reservation of forest communities in Tasmania, and following the Community Forest Agreement in particular there was a significant increase in the area of rainforest that is now in the reserve system that is very well reserved.

Mrs NAPIER - Six hundred hectares as a compensation for going through 6 hectares seems almost like a bit of a reaction to me. Is that necessary or is that advisable?

Mr PETERSON - All of that area was coupes and, because of the tourist road going through, it is not possible to harvest those areas. In fact, parts of the alignment of the road were proposed roads for harvesting purposes and now that they are becoming a tourist corridor with management for visual amenity we are not going to harvest them. So if you do not have access to the coupes, you might as well put them into a reserve. And the other purpose of that, as I pointed yesterday, was that there is an identified geoheritage-type site and the proposed reserve has been slightly extended to incorporate that particular feature. It was currently within a coupe, a small reserve in our management decision classification, but now the reserve will be enlarged to incorporate it and it will be much better protected in the future.

Mrs NAPIER - Thank you.

Mr LESTER - I will just briefly run through some of the safeguards because again I think we have covered a lot of this in discussion earlier on but there will be a flora and fauna management plan that will capture a lot of what we have discussed today in relation to those matters. For the flora, the plant species, it is really about just protecting a couple of key populations on the western extent from damage during construction so it is about marking where they are on the ground and making sure they are not damaged.

Similarly, it's quite important for these areas, because there are areas that suffer from both myrtle wilt and phytophthora along this region, that we develop a comprehensive weed and plant pathogen management plan. Again, this is not something new - wash down procedures and other things that DIER has used elsewhere in the State. At the reserve on Sisters Hills at the Dip Range Regional Reserve, for example, there were high conservation values and there were also phytophthora issues, so it's a case of just capturing all that and preparing a plan that makes sure it's well communicated both to the Federal Government and other State approval agencies but also the broader community and, importantly, the contractor.

Fauna: we've spoken about the key measures relating to the Tasmanian devil and the spotted quoll and we'll move on in a minute to some of the diagrams that illustrate that. I guess one of the things I didn't mention earlier that's important to point out is that a lot of these measures will be occurring on the western extent of the road - if you like, retrofitting an existing high speed, reasonably trafficked road environment. So, there's potential for a net benefit there, given that, at the moment, cars can travel on those gravel roads at 80-plus kph and there is no mitigation whatsoever. In fact, some of the table drains would make it extremely difficult for animals.

Similarly, you've got quite a wide road on that section 26 and 27 so where you're heading south before Couta Rock. So a lot of the measures are about improving elements of the road network that exist now and that's certainly where we're focusing the road kill study at this stage because they are the high traffic areas and areas where we can see there might be existing but also future problems unmitigated.

We've spoken about facial tumour disease and the monitoring so I think we'll just move on from that. I think we have also covered the wedge-tailed eagle. So, with both that

and the grey goshawk, it's really a case of knowing where the nests are and then acting appropriately if nests are found. As I said, for both of those species there has been no evidence of any nests within an area of concern of this road. We are going to extend the surveys for both again just to be absolutely certain.

Then there's the butterfly, which, again, we'll ensure that they're not there but also ensure that that particular habitat area is protected during the construction phase. Again, we're talking about those western sections.

We've spoken of the kingfisher. Really, it's a case of determining if there are any nests there and ceasing work until the young are fledged. Similarly with the *Astacopsis gouldi*, the giant freshwater crayfish, it's really a case of ensuring that there aren't any within the waterways prior to construction and, again, DIER is engaged with a local professional, Todd Walsh, who is a specialist in hunting down crayfish and moving them to somewhere else within the river system but then also ensuring the design of culverts and other such things are appropriate for the lobsters.

These are indicative diagrams of some of the options for road kill mitigation. They are up behind you and they are also on the desk behind us. They are things we've discussed: reducing the seal width to 4 metres - and I should stress they are all indicative drawings - and ensuring a wide verge - and it is a verge, not the actual pavement - improves sight. So, the first measure - the reduction to 4 metres - slows traffic down and the second - maintaining a wide verge - gives good sight for both the driver and the animal.

I turn to the changes in colour and the ruffle strips. Changes in colour will create contrast, the ruffle strips are to make a little bit of noise and they are also cues for drivers to let them know, in addition to signage, that they are entering an area where you need to take due care because of wildlife issues.

Mrs NAPIER - Why do you use the word 'possible' there, because it seems to me they are some very sensible mitigation strategies?

Mr LESTER - Yes, they are and they will all be used. I guess what we're suggesting is -

Mrs NAPIER - I wouldn't want to see it as being optional.

Mr LESTER - No. I want to stress that point; they are not optional measures. Each of these will be applied where appropriate on the road. The data collection we are doing now with hotspots will determine where that will be.

Mrs NAPIER - Who gets to decide whether that road mitigation system might be used or not, the contractor or you?

Mr LESTER - No, us - DEWHA and other approval agencies. We will develop the management plan and when we respond to DEWHA in relation to the EPBC matters then at that stage we will -

Mrs NAPIER - So they are not likely to be dropped because of cost implications?

Mr LESTER - No, you could not because you would then be in breach of subsequent approval from DEWHA so it is quite important and the ECI process allows us to engage with the contractor beyond what is typical for a design team to ensure that precisely what we had in mind is carried through -

Mrs NAPIER - That sounds very sensible to me.

Mr LESTER - Yes - but there will be very rigorous statutory controls over ensuring that these occur and that there is ongoing monitoring.

This is another stylised one and it is really to show an animal runway or escape. These are not literal in the sense that obviously we probably would not have it parallel to the road, we would have it off at an appropriate angle but it is really just to illustrate that these are the measures that we will use at various places within the rainforest environment.

Mrs NAPIER - Who makes sure that they are maintained?

Mr LESTER - DIER, so that will become part of the DIER management.

Mrs NAPIER - You do see on some roads strategies that were put there and you have a big rain storm and they fill up and they do not get cleared out so they are not much good to the animal.

Mr LESTER - There are other things that we can use, such as designing culverts in such a fashion that they can provide runways under the road for animals and you can fence on the side of the roads to channel to those runways. Each of these measures we have highlighted here are very simple and there is very little maintenance involved with all of them. There are further measures that we can use and we will certainly use the most appropriate for each particular situation but the aim will be to make it low maintenance and easy and reduce the ongoing cost burden for DIER. We also aim to ensure that the measures work for a period of time and are not something that is put in and works for 12 months and then starts to fail due to a maintenance penalty.

Mr CANTILLON - This is the point I was raising earlier about handover from construction to maintenance and the embedding of it. These are the sorts of things that we want to see work and this is a commitment we need to make for the project to be a success and derive a legacy.

Mr LESTER - There will be ongoing monitoring as well post-construction. We have not highlighted the method or way we are going to go about that but that is because that is something that we will develop over the next few months in consultation with DEWHA and particularly a number of people within that threatened species section of the State government department. If we assume that there is an approval through the DEWHA, EPBC process, they have a fairly stringent monitoring compliance section that will keep us honest going into the future.

Mr CANTILLON - It is more than likely there will be a post-project review, I would imagine, by the Federal Government.

Mr PETERSON - There is certainly a fair indication that animals are very reluctant to go onto light coloured backgrounds - particularly devils. If you have a black road surface and you put a dark animal on it, it will feel much more comfortable, they are not exposed but if you have a light-coloured surface there is such contrast there that they feel exposed.

Mr GERATHY - On community consultation - I have been assisting the team with engaging with the community and with stakeholders. We have been working fairly systematically to talk to people. One of the things that we have been doing is setting up a process whereby those people who are interested in the project we can brief them individually or in groups and we have met large groups of people - and I will go through the list in a minute. But it certainly centres on talking to people about aspects of the project that they are unclear about or that they are interested in. We have not gone about selling the project as such, but we have been presenting the facts to the stakeholders and then letting them make up their own minds. We put together a couple of information sheets to help that process as well. We also asked people if they would like to receive more information and we put together an e-mail system where we updated them on a regular basis as to what was happening and how the process was going.

One thing we did talk to people about was access. It comes back to the project being about equity of access to the locations. We certainly found that, as we have seen, access to some of the locations is very difficult - four-wheel drive access. Lake Chisholm is fair, Julius River is good, Sumac is good and Kanunnah Bridge is dangerous. People would like to see that location but it is quite dangerous. That is part of the process. Talking to tourism people, they said they would like to see it upgraded and made safe. Couta Rocks, we decided through the consultation, was not part of the development program.

So far the groups we have talked to, in a broad sense, are the north-west communities. We held a couple of information sessions, as you know. We have spoken to key media groups. We have spoken to a lot of the north-west businesses throughout Burnie, Smithton and Wynyard and so forth, the north-west business groups, local government, wildlife experts, business leaders, tourism operators, the RACT and obviously they had a keen interest in it, Grange Resources, government agencies, the Tourism Industry Council, Cradle Coast Authority, Ross Britton, Tarkine Trails, the honey producers and the Tarkine National Coalition. Talking is a two-way process and we have been encouraging people to give us their views. We have been capturing those and, where possible, taking them into account. So it has encouraged them to give us feedback on the project if they have problems with it or if they are not sure about different sections. As Phil said today, they met with Richard Summers again; he had a number of issues and they are working through them and working collaboratively together to resolve them. So it is very much a transparent process, seeing as many people as possible.

So there is the face-to-face process. We set up web site within the DIER web site where people can download any of the information. Obviously the information we are presenting today will be loaded onto the web site after this so people can download it and look at it. There is a 1300 feedback number as well. So we have been encouraging people, if they have issues, to e-mail them in via that web site or on the 1300 number or face-to-face.

We have put together some information sheets. It is not a promotional brochure or anything, purely the nuts and bolts of the project, an overview of design and timings and so forth. As things have progressed, of course, these are becoming a little out of date and they might need to be refreshed. One brochure centred on the proposed tourism facilities and has become out of date because we have adopted certain recommendations from consultation. We had information displays, maps, fliers, counter cards and posters. They were at Tall Timbers, Circular Head Council, the Stanley Visitor Centre, Boat Harbour Store, Waratah-Wynyard Council, Wonders of Wynyard, Burnie City Council Chambers, Bryan's office, the Central Coast Council, the Devonport City Council and the *Circular Head Chronicle* offices. So people have displayed them for us and interested stakeholders have come and grabbed copies and taken them away.

We have all found a lot of confusion out there amongst stakeholders about the project. They did not know what it was about. All they had heard was that this big road was going through. When we gave them some information they were able to have a more balanced view about it. As we said, we weren't there to sway them either way; we wanted them to be informed, ask questions and make up their own minds. Generally speaking, once people saw what was already there they were pretty comfortable with it. We have had a very good response and people have been really pleased that we had taken the time to talk to them, gone to see them, spent some time with them, shaken their hand and encouraged their feedback. That has been a very positive outcome of the project.

Mr HALL - Obviously it has been a contentious project at times and there have been public meetings and all those sorts of things. With regard to negative feedback, which groups or individuals are still outside the loop and who still have a lot of concerns? Can you pinpoint those?

Mr GERATHY - The major groups that have concerns are the conservations groups. That is fair enough; that is their job. Obviously we have spoken to Scott, Gar and Phil, so we are keen to get some feedback and we would like to hear their concerns. We would like to address those concerns. That is part of the process, that we want to capture that information.

Mr HALL - Have you been getting feedback from them and been able to address their concerns?

Mr GERATHY - One of the key groups that had some concerns about the project was the Cradle Coast Authority but as time has gone by we have taken on board a lot of the good information they've given us so we are getting closer to a really good working relationship with them.

Mr HALL - So as far as the project goes the Cradle Coast Authority is still not across the line?

Mr GERATHY - I think a better description is to say that they can see merit in some components of it; likewise there is some great stuff in their plan that can really assist this project as well. We are taking some great information that they have and they can see merit in the approach we are taking.

Mr HALL - What has been their major concern?

Mr GERATHY - Their major concern is that they have their strategy that approaches the development of the tourism industry in the Tarkine in a particular way and this project falls outside that strategy. Their strategy doesn't include the link and approaches developing the industry in a slightly different time frame. That is their major concern.

Mr HALL - What about the tourism operators? Some have been outside the loop. It seems to me, just reading the press, that some have been supportive and others have been less supportive.

Mr GERATHY - To tell you the truth, Greg, the people we have all spoken to, the tourism operators up here, are okay with it.

Mr HALL - When you say 'up here', you mean -

Mr GERATHY - In the north-west region.

Mr HALL - Circular Head and Wynyard-Waratah?

Mr GERATHY - Yes.

Mr BEST - And Devonport.

Mrs NAPIER - So are you saying the Cradle Coast Authority doesn't represent the tourism operators?

Mr GERATHY - No, I'm saying individual tourism operators. If we take the Circular Head Tourism Association, they are very positive; they are right behind it at an organisational level. When we had our trade booth at the tourism forum that Cradle Coast held at Strahan, the tourism operators who came along and spoke to us about it - and we gave them the information - all said, 'Okay, no worries'. They were very surprised. A number of them said to me, 'But I thought a bulldozer was going through and putting 130 kilometres of new road through', and I said, 'No, here's the map'. We presented them with the facts and they said, 'Now I can understand it' and they were okay with it. It wasn't a particularly scientific sample but once they got the information and understood the project they were okay with it. Like most things, when people don't know about things they're often afraid. Engagement and communication is about giving them information to break that fear down. So there was a level of fear there: 'I don't know anything about this project. Is it going to damage this fantastic asset? I don't know what to think about it.' Once they got some information it was, 'Right, I can understand it more and I've got a more balanced view about it'.

Mr HALL - And the local government authorities? Circular Head was supportive but it seemed to me that Waratah-Wynyard was a bit iffy.

Mr GERATHY - Yes, that's a good description. Circular Head is right behind it. As time goes by, and I can't speak for Kevin here, and certainly from the meetings we've had with him and with the Waratah-Wynyard Council, they sort of warm to the project. I think they are much more positive and confident about it now than they were in the beginning.

Mr HALL - And Burnie?

Mr GERATHY - Burnie is excellent. They are right behind it. The same with Central Coast and Devonport City Council.

Mr GREEN - Would you say, through your consultation process, that you found this road has been divisive within the community?

Mr GERATHY - Well, the problem is that a project like this is fought out in the media. So the Government says we're going to build this road, the people that aren't happy with it say they don't want to run with it, there are the conservation groups and it's all fought out in the media. It's hard to know what you're actually dealing with.

Mr GREEN - On the ground, I'm asking about.

Mr GERATHY - I understand but in terms of the community it's hard for them to get a feel for any project that is contentious. When you present facts to them that's when they can make up their own minds. That's the job that we've been undertaking - letting people make up their own minds based on the facts. What's there at the moment, what DIER are going to do and how they're going to build it, the standards they're going to use and how they're going to protect the environment, once they are presented with all of those facts then generally speaking people are reasonably positive about it.

Mrs NAPIER - Do we have a costing for stage 1, stage 2 and stage 3 separately?

Mr CANTILLON - Not really. We've looked at it in aggregate rather than individually, so we'd have to weave that together. It's not readily available.

Mrs NAPIER - The question was earlier asked about if it were to be let under three stages or one, so there would need to be some estimate of what stages 1, 2 and 3 would cost. Presumably that was taken into account when the analyses were done of their relative contribution and multiplier factor.

Mr CANTILLON - No. For construction purposes there was a meeting to decide the best way to deal with this, given the scale of the job. It is 140 km of infrastructure; it is big so how do you approach it? Well, you've got to do it in stages; that's the inevitability of it. Stages 1 and 3 were seen together; we needed to keep the momentum going on Phantom Valley, so that's why stage 3 went into the mix with stage 1. The infrastructure wasn't as substantive. Also, the approach we've taken gives us a little bit more time to solve some of the issues associated with section 3. We hope that perhaps with DEWHA approval processes we can get earlier release of sites. We can, with our State regulatory bodies, get earlier release of sites. Our approach has been with DEWHA that we will make every endeavour to try to get early release of sites where they don't have an interest.

Mrs NAPIER - Do we know what stage 3 will cost?

Mr CANTILLON - No.

Mrs NAPIER - But it could presumably be calculated?

Mr CANTILLON - No.

Mrs NAPIER - You can tell me the individual cost for bridges, we've certainly got that, and we know that some new sections of road are going to be some part of that, so presumably we would have some idea of what it's likely to cost us.

Mr PETERSON - Can I just go back to the point you made about the relationship with the benefit multiplier. The Felmingham report actually does deal with that. A costing has been done on the three options. The benefit multiplier of 1.93 for the full project was compared with negative values or almost negative values for the other two options. That was certainly done. I think if you were to look in the detail of the Felmingham report then that would potentially answer the questions you ask.

Mrs NAPIER - Do you recall whether that took into account the assumption that was made in the Moore report that no major icon developments would occur if you did not go ahead with stage 3? I just ask because I would have to go back and read it again too.

Mr PETERSON - My understanding of the data from the Moore report comes from numerous sources. It is based on very detailed analysis of the Tasmanian Visitor Survey data, travel data and vehicle data that came from numerous sources. I know that the statisticians who work for EMBA and SEA are highly qualified. They are leading industry consultants in Australasia and certainly a lot of background analysis was undertaken in that context of the breakdown for each of the options. For example, if you were to do the western option, just south of Forest Drive and seal around to Arthur River, what kind of attractors are there, what kind of opportunities are there and what kind of investment would likely occur? Their analysis and research suggested that it would be difficult, relative to the cost of that component, to justify doing major development.

What the tourism consultants have got from the branding analysis is that you need to bring all the key elements together to create the icon. The icon really is this large charm bracelet, this touring route, which links all those attractors. It is not just the attractors along this particular section of road that we want to upgrade; it is all the other attractors like Stanley, Smithton, the wind farm, Edge of the World - they are all part of the package. That is what they looked at. They saw that as being very important.

One of the other comments I recall was that the return to the community, the benefit, which is calculated to be in the order of \$70 million, comes largely from the number of days that people stay, the increased number of bed nights - the accommodation values. When people stay that extra night it is worth something in the order of \$275 per person per night. If somebody is just travelling through you are only looking at \$30 or \$40 so there are quite substantial differences there. When you have people staying for two or three nights in a region, which is what they anticipate will happen with this series of loops within the bigger loop, the increase in value is significant - many times than the shorter options.

The other issue is the backtracking one. They stated very clearly, and it comes out in research in southern Tasmania, that you need to have loops. People do not like to

backtrack. They need quality roads, loops and very high-class attractors that give them the experiences they desire, in particular in that nature tourism element.

Mrs NAPIER - I could debate that but I will not. Couta Rocks gets mentioned in the issue of sealing.

Mr PETERSON - It has been through the consultation process attached to that and has been dropped off the list. The feedback we received was that the tourism operators, the tourism industry, did not think that was a vital development.

Mrs NAPIER - Probably wouldn't want them down there anyhow.

Mr GERATHY - No. Hence, that information sheet now is out of date.

Mr CANTILLON - We've spoken at length, I suppose, about the staging of it and rationale for it. Timing-wise, we are well into development now. We are looking at, hopefully with your support, obtaining approval before Christmas if that were to occur. We've got an industry briefing about planning for December. We were looking at trying to tender before Christmas if we could, subject to your support, but we think it's more likely to be January, which I think is consistent.

Mr GREEN - It can go to tender whenever you like.

Mr CANTILLON - Yes, like Brighton, we wrote to you specifically on that one and we'd do the same thing again - just as a courtesy more than anything.

We've been through the ECI process; we know the warts, the strengths, what to look for, how to get through it quickly. We know the sort of tenderer we're looking for so that would form part of the tendering process, so we undertake that fairly quickly. A contract could be awarded. It's within the delegations of our secretary for awarding that, irrespective of the caretaker government protocols in place. We envisage continuing to negotiate with all the approving bodies and, if we can, early release sites through negotiation. Part of that, for example, is Tayatea Bridge, which we've negotiated now. We want to keep the momentum on that. We would see potential early works, subject to approvals, in April, May or June but going in full flight from about July. The key requirement will be the DEWHA approval, and what they announce before Christmas is the process we have to go through. That's really the key, time-dependent, hence our negotiations with them. However, we don't see any doubt in completing the project by June 2012.

Mrs NAPIER - Early work is happening in April through to June. That's putting it into winter. Does it rain down there all the time?

Mr CANTILLON - No, not always; it just depends. There might be activity you can do in the western area if it's cleared or in the eastern area. Early works can include a whole raft of things. In Brighton, for example, they were services works, preliminary earthworks and related clearing, so there's a whole swag of things that we could put under the early works umbrella.

Mrs NAPIER - Presumably you would try to do things that were away from key tourism sites. March, April, May is a good time to be down on the west coast.

Mr CANTILLON - That's right.

Mr GREEN - You'll be campaigning, Sue, so don't worry about it.

Mrs NAPIER - Well I am campaigning and worried about it because I'll probably want to pull the middle bit out.

Mr CANTILLON - We've got to have those discussions with the tourism operators about the way we approach it and program the job. They're the broad timings that we're aspiring to. Staging and broad timings: sections 1 and 2 - first 18 months. Section 3, middle section, new link section, Tarkine loop road - last 12 months of the construction program

Costings: we have a \$23 million budget. It does include tourism infrastructure. We see it is a key component of it. We have set aside \$2.5 million. We have an estimate notionally at the moment of \$25.5 million. We have some challenges to bring it down. There have been lots of innovations so far. We have brought it down through discussions. We mentioned Arthur River Road. There are other locations, other innovations, that we hope to bring on board.

You will notice in the estimate a significant amount of contingency in the job. You take the contingency off the back of the \$23 million. There is \$500 000 worth of environmental mitigation works. We have factored in cost escalation, so we think the process we are going through and the level of detail we are investing in the job at this early point puts us in the best possible position to deliver it for \$23 million.

Mr HALL - You talk about the contingency but on page 14 you say that the budget of \$23 million for the project is very tight. I am just wondering how you reconcile those two statements, even though you have that in there?

Mr CANTILLON - At the moment if you have a look at the estimates we have in there, the \$23 million pretty well factors in quantities and contemporary construction rates for the job. It factors in mitigation measures. Escalation adds up to about \$23 million and then you have some contingency on that. I would rather have more contingency under the \$23 million, so that is the challenge we have. We have made inroads already and we will continue to make inroads through understanding the needs of the job. You will remember earlier on I said it was about appreciating the extent of investment we need to put in each section. We do not want to underinvest because we need to meet our regulatory requirements. We do not want to overinvest, so we are very measured in the way we are approaching it. We are going through at a rate of knots but we are in the best-placed position to achieve the \$23 million.

Mr HALL - So your gut feeling is that you will pull it in on that budget?

Mr CANTILLON - Yes. The \$2.5 million for tourism infrastructure facilities is a list. We would like to go as far west as we can. As we mentioned when we were on site, can we pick up the viewing platform at Kanunnah on the far western end? We would like to.

Mrs NAPIER - There is no contingency on tourism infrastructure, though?

Mr CANTILLON - That is correct. But having said that, they are based on our rates. We hope to achieve that as best we can. This is why we have the steering committee set up. We have scaled what the priorities are: Phantom Valley moving west; Kanunnah Bridge is part of the landscape and we would like to put the viewing platform there. Would that get traded off against some miscellaneous works or would it get traded off against putting in a second loo at Julius River? It could do, I do not know, but that is why we have the group there because they are going to guide us. We are using them as our sponsor to guide us in terms of how we should spend that money. We have the money but they have got the know-how so we plan to use that very well.

Mrs NAPIER - What is the cost of stage 3?

Mr CANTILLON - I cannot answer that one, hand on heart, but the way we have approached it is very disciplined. It is the way we do our general estimating. It is no different to the way we estimated the Brighton project - a \$250 million job.

Mr GERATHY - We've got three testimonials. These people are keen to let you know their views. Jason Clare is a tourism operator up in Stanley. He also runs the visitor centre there. He's very keen on the project and thinks it'll add a lot. He was keen to let you know his views. He has a number of tourism businesses in Stanley - he did the railway station down there. He has just started a luxury furniture shop that's going really well.

Mayor Daryl Quilliam, of Circular Head is also right behind the project. Also Robbie Charles, owner of Blue Hills Honey at Mawbanna, was keen for you to know his views as well.

I think that wraps up our presentation.

CHAIR - Thank you, it's been very comprehensive.

Mr HALL - A couple of questions. One was about the tourists - where do interstate tourists come from? Do they come from the east, off the boat?

Mr BEST - They could fly in to Burnie airport.

Mr PETERSON - Probably, I could answer best because we did quite a bit of research on this some time back. The main entry points into Tasmania are certainly Hobart and Launceston. Then progressively as you move west, Devonport and Wynyard are about the same in terms of numbers but they are still relatively small in the context of the total visitation to the State. There is a lot of data within the Tasmanian Visitor Survey that indicate where people are travelling in the context of the regions. You can establish how many are coming from Hobart in particular and which way they are coming. So, there are certainly still a lot of people who are doing the Tasmanian circuit but the shift in recent years has been more towards three- to four-day trips into the State and they're looking for regional destinations. So, in that context, we now believe that Launceston will be a key entry point for particularly the fly-in market; they will pick up hire vehicles there and Burnie is still only an hour-and-a-half from Launceston; people will move along the coast and if they're heading towards the Tarkine then that's probably a key

entry point because of the cheaper flights that go into those major centres. Devonport and Wynyard airports or Burnie airport are certainly very important and I know that Burnie City Council sees the development of the Tarkine and Tarkine road as a key impetus for them to market further, particularly Wynyard airport.

People coming on the boat arrive quite early in the morning. A lot of them just shuffle along the coast. They tend to split; some head due east but there's quite a number heading west. I think the way that people move on the loops will in a large part be determined by the timing of their arrival at the entry point. If you look at a key decision point being at Myalla turn-off on the Bass Highway; if you arrive relatively early in the morning you might decide to head down to Phantom Valley and then spread out, have a look at the lookout in the afternoon and go back out via Tayatea to Smithton or Stanley and stay the night. If it is later in the afternoon they are more likely to head along the coast and stay in Stanley or Smithton, and then loop back over the next two or three days back to their departure points, whether it be Wynyard, Devonport or Launceston.

That is the kind of concept that is in the background about how people are going to move. You still have numbers coming up from the west coast - those who are doing the bigger tour. Hopefully we can get them to stay that extra night or two. There will certainly be a lot of people, particularly the grey nomads who will grow in numbers - they are not huge numbers at the moment - who will take the opportunity to go down the Western Explorer, travelling at a nice pace. It is anticipated that places like Corinna will benefit from this. It is not about trying to concentrate everybody just within the loop area - certainly people will have many more opportunities. People in tourism to whom I have spoken suggest that tourists will go off in different directions - there will be some coming from Cradle Mountain. It is just increasing the opportunities and the pathways that people will use.

Mr GERATHY - Just quickly on that point - at the last meeting we had with Kevin Hyland he was certainly a lot more positive about the road and he said one of the developments that his council were keen on in Burnie City was getting increased numbers of tourists coming into Burnie airport to do short stays and do a trip around the Tarkine Road and then go back out again. They can see that this is a good project to further develop their airport and its infrastructure in the volume passing through there.

CHAIR - Thank you very much gentlemen. We have got one more witness to give evidence to the committee so we will invite you to pack up what you have got. You probably should stay so you can hear the proceedings and we may need to call you back to test some matters but we will see how that pans out.

Mr SCOTT JORDAN, TOURISM PROJECT OFFICER, TARKINE NATIONAL COALITION WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR - The process simply is that we invite you to make your presentation. If you have a document in written form we would invite you to table that and we can then take that into our formal evidence and we would appreciate that if you do have something. I think we will proceed the way we have with the departmental witnesses - if you do not mind if we interrupt during your presentation because while things are fresh in our mind it is productive to ask the questions along the way.

Mr JORDAN - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr JORDAN - I have prepared a presentation which I had initially intended to read through but I guess, given the lateness of the day, my naivety of the process and having seen how it works, it might be more appropriate for me to give an overview of the document and then make available to you the notes I was going to read from.

CHAIR - Yes, that's fine and don't feel pressured by time. It's important that we properly assess this project. You've made the submission to us and it's important that you get the opportunity to properly flesh that out so that we can then test that as well. So, please don't feel pressured by the time.

Mr JORDAN - Okay. I guess, with our presentation, we've tried to address three questions regarding the project - first, is it necessary; second, is it economically sound; and third, is it environmentally sustainable? So, we've aimed our presentation at trying to answer those three questions.

In relation to the first question, is it necessary - we believe that fundamentally the answer to this question is no. We believe the Tarkine has incredible potential for tourism, a potential that is already yielding benefits to the area. The Tarkine already has more than 400 km of high-quality sealed and unsealed roads and more current and former forestry roads in the area that provide access to visitor sites. The network already accesses numerous lookouts, bushwalking tracks and features in the Tarkine and the tourism operators currently working in the area around the Tarkine have based their businesses on these existing networks.

The Tarkine National Coalition has recently produced a visitor's guide to the Tarkine region with 24 walks, lookouts and features that are all accessible by the existing road network. I have copies of that here for the committee. It was produced with funds from the Tasmanian Forest Tourism Initiative, which came out of the 2005 reserves. We worked with the Cradle Coast Authority on producing it and it contains a map in there with a number of visitor sites, many of which are actually managed by Forestry Tasmania and a lot of which are actually on the road and accessible now.

The Cradle Coast Authority's Tarkine Tourism Development Strategy was the result of more than two years of consultation and input from a wide range of groups representing tourism groups, Forestry Tasmania, Parks and Wildlife Service, Tourism Tasmania, four

local government areas, the Aboriginal community and the Tarkine National Coalition as well as extensive market research and consultants' reports on the needs for tourism in the area.

The Tarkine Tourism Development Strategy did not support the Tarkine Road. Instead, quite rightly, it advocated a broad strategy of utilising existing road networks with the natural visitor nodes of Corinna in the south, Waratah in the east and Arthur River in the far north-west. The market analysis contained in the strategy predicted the creation of more than 1 100 jobs through the clever use of branding the natural values of the Tarkine, maintaining its integrity at the heart of the tourism offering. The Tarkine National Coalition supports the Tarkine Tourism Development Strategy.

In relation to that strategy, I think the work done by the Cradle Coast Authority was quite remarkable in that, in the context of that agreement, we'd just come out of a fairly lengthy debate over many years about reserves in the Tarkine and whether they should or shouldn't happen and to get all those groups with quite divergent views into the room and working over two years to come together with a tourism strategy that we could all broadly agree to was remarkable. I don't believe anybody got everything they wanted but we all came to a position that we were comfortable with and were happy to proceed with. Certainly, from our perspective there are things that we would have liked to see that didn't get up but we felt we were able to support the consensus document as being a way forward. I think Cradle Coast needs to be congratulated on that work and they certainly did come up with a process that was workable and could be delivered without conflict.

CHAIR - I have just written down as best I recall that you indicated that the development strategy did not support the development of this road -

Mr JORDAN - That's right.

CHAIR - I don't understand the process at all that's been applied in the past; I'm not familiar with it. This specific road was on the drawing board at the time of the consideration of that strategy, was it?

Mr JORDAN - It came in very late in the piece. Forestry Tasmania proposed it and they lobbied for it and made presentations to various stakeholders. It was presented to the Tarkine discussion group who made up the consultation with those groups represented there and the final document that was produced did not support the road as it was. It felt that the strategy of using the three visitor nodes and building on the existing network that was there was the far better strategy. One of the criticisms of the current road project was that it actually left two of the three visitor nodes out of the picture - Waratah does not get a look in and Corinna does not get a look in - so those key stakeholders in the Tarkine tourism picture got left out, along with the west coast community that would benefit from those visitor nodes being part of the tourism picture in the Tarkine.

Mrs NAPIER - Can I just ask how late? Months or a year?

Mr JORDAN - No, probably in the last eight to 10 months of the process. Most of the market analysis work had been done previous to that. Certainly the Government announcement that they were funding it came very late but certainly Mike had been

actively working on the project before that and it was no secret - I guess it would be over 10 months.

Mr GREEN - There had been an announcement in the election prior.

Mr BEST - I would like to get this clear - I have not got a large enough map here to show but when you are talking about loops, are you talking about some of the loops that are already involved but just not that piece that runs across the Tarkine lookout? Is that what you are talking about?

Mr JORDAN - We are specifically referring to the road in its entirety. Obviously the most controversial parts are the section between the south Arthur Forest Drive and the Hilders Bridge site at Meunna.

Mr BEST - Just so I am clear you are saying there was agreement within your group about, say, the Arthur River to Kanunnah Bridge for example, that loop or which loops are you talking about on the existing road you mentioned -

Mr JORDAN - There is certainly an existing road outside that area. We have not promoted any particular loop within our guide but what we have promoted is a range of spots that you can visit.

Mr BEST - I am sorry, I thought you said there were loops that the group agreed upon?

Mr JORDAN - No. They referred to visitor nodes where the idea was you would have your base of your infrastructure around Corinna, Waratah and Arthur River and then from there you are able to take visitors into the Tarkine and have an experience from that location but then going back to a space there and then feeding back into Waratah, Burnie, the west coast towns.

Mr BEST - Is the group agreeable to use some of the existing roads that are there or not at all?

Mr JORDAN - Certainly we are quite comfortable with using existing road. The contentious piece for us is the area between Hilders Bridge at Meunna and where it connects back up with the South Arthur loop at Tayatea Road. I guess that was the next part of my presentation.

Mr BEST - Sorry, I did not want to pre-empt you; I was trying to get a clear picture. I could not understand it because you were saying that obviously there had been wide and lengthy discussion in the group and that they had agreed on a series of loops, well I thought you said loops but obviously you are saying nodes. That would mean the use of some of these existing roads.

Mr JORDAN - Absolutely.

Mr BEST - Right.

Mr JORDAN - That section is the controversial part. It is not all new road - some of it is taking existing road that generally would not see traffic. It would see some forestry

personnel, maybe the odd fisherman, but it is not a high traffic road as it would be under the current plan.

Mr BEST - It is on the very edge, though, isn't it? It is not like, say, the Lyell Highway where that goes through a big section of wilderness. It is only on the very edge, isn't it?

Mr JORDAN - You are referring to the reserve?

Mr BEST - The piece that you label as contentious.

Mr JORDAN - It skirts through the reserve near the Meunna end.

Mr BEST - How many kilometres would that be roughly - the bit you find contentious - in terms of going into that Tarkine area?

Mr JORDAN - That whole section that we find contentious probably would be a 20- or 30-kilometre stretch.

Mr BEST - Yes but I mean you would only actually go through a few -

Mr JORDAN - But we certainly have issues with some of the area outside of the reserves as well. We don't believe that the current reserve is adequate for protection of the Tarkine and so we certainly have not limited our comments to this particular reserve. We believe the new section does not service any existing attractions. It is premised on creating an experience at Tarkine Lookout and Tarkine Falls. They are both good attractions. They are currently accessed off a four-day wilderness walk. It's used by a commercial operator, Tarkine Trails. As well, a number of web sites around the place advocate it as a four-day walk. We have track notes at our office and I get four to five inquiries a month requesting those track notes. We don't widely publicise that we have them because we like to make sure that if we're sending someone in there for a four-day walk they are capable of doing it. I think most people would get those track notes off the Internet. In addition, I think Mike mentioned about 70 people that Tarkine Trails took through that area last year. I would estimate that another 100 people went self-guided, doing that four-day Blue Peak Walk, as it is commonly known as. It comes in off the area around Hilders Bridge, doubles in around Blue Peak, visits those sites and exits back out at the Farquhars Bridge site.

Mr BEST - That's not very many, though, is it - 170?

Mr JORDAN - It's not, but in terms of Tarkine Trails, people are paying around \$2 000 for that experience so it is a high-value experience. In terms of their business, their indication to us is that they can't continue in that area with a road through the middle of it. You can't charge someone that sort of price for a wilderness experience and have them listen to buses pass by.

Mr BEST - Could they run a tour, though, further into the Tarkine Reserve?

Mr JORDAN - I believe they have to look at other options at the moment because this simply won't be available to them. I don't want to speak for them at all. They are in

negotiations at the moment but I know it's been fairly distressing for them and we've been in constant dialogue with them.

We believe that those two attractions could still be attractions in the current way that they are, accessible on a four-day walk, much as various sites along the Overland Track are accessed by tourists who don't need a car to get there. It's important that, within the mix of Tarkine tourism, we actually have a range and diversity of sites, some that you go to in a car and some that are actually fairly special and you do have to travel to get to them. We think it is acceptable to have some spots that require an effort, and the value to the tourism sector is that it captures that end of the market.

Mr HALL - With that four-day wilderness walk that exists at the moment, if this proposal went ahead then could that be complementary? Would that negate the values of that walk?

Mr JORDAN - The routing of the road means that in a number of parts along that trail you would hear traffic. Given the type of visitor who wants to go out for a four-day wilderness experience, to hear traffic isn't part of what they're expecting.

Mr HALL - Is that the only downside? I am a bushwalker myself and sometimes, even down the south-west, you get a chopper going over or whatever. Sometimes that just happens.

Mr JORDAN - That's the reality, but on this section of road you are talking about high levels of traffic, so you can't sell that walk as a wilderness experience. You would find a drop in the people who wanted to do it as a self-guided walk. Certainly Tarkine Trails' operators believe that it will end their operations in the area and would seriously jeopardise the nature of their business. They're not sure they'll be able to continue and they're trying to negotiate new agreements at the moment.

Mr HALL - Are there any other options to change the route of that particular four-day walk to get away from that?

Mr JORDAN - Well, they'd have to move right out of that area; that is their problem. I understand they've had some negotiations with Mike about what alternatives might be available. He's probably in a better position to talk about those options but certainly it's having an impact on their business. If they can't find an alternative site that's suitable and that they can get permits for, their business will finish.

Mr BEST - If you go to Cradle Mountain, you drive into the edge of the World Heritage Area, so why is this so different? If you are driving to the edge of it, why couldn't the walk be through the Tarkine and come out at another point, like you do with the Overland Track.

Mr JORDAN - The issue is that is where that current walk is. You have to understand they have spent years developing that product. They looked at a number of sites and found that that was the best one. If you look on their web site, you will see that some of the testimonials claim it to be one of the best wilderness walks on offer. They have invested a lot of their own capital in doing the track works to get in there. When we have storms as we have had recently it means those guys are out there for three weeks, fixing the

track up so they can get the next crew in. It is not a case that they just show up and walk a particular piece of forest. These guys are serious operators; they have spent the last five years building their business and I guess they have been poleaxed a bit by this road. I am not here to speak on their behalf. I just wanted to make the point that there are commercial operators that are affected by this. Certainly self-guided tourists, who also add a lot of value to the economy through spending at either end of their trip, will be impacted by it.

In relation to the upgrade of the existing road network the coalition has remained willing right from the beginning to discuss alternative routing of the road to utilise existing road. Mike came and saw us about two years ago and presented the proposal initially. We indicated at the time that we had an issue with the new sections and the section between Meunna and Tayatea Road, but we were quite happy to look at alternatives. We think the alternatives proposed by Cradle Coast Authority - coming down from Smithton and accessing it via the South Arthur loop and continuing on to the coast - was a viable option. It would be a far cheaper option and it would remove the contentious section but still give a loop-road experience.

Backtracking has obviously been put up as an argument, but we do not necessarily agree with it. A lot of sites around Tasmania that get the highest visitor numbers already have backtracking, which debunks that position. In terms of highway traffic, the difference between turning in at Myalla to come in at the current entry point at Meunna or going to Smithton is about 20 minutes on the road. In terms of a six-hour drive, 20 minutes further on one road rather than another is not a big impact. The Government could save substantial funds, remove a lot of the controversy and we could be getting on with something that promotes tourism in the area in a far less contentious way.

Another alternative that we proposed was going 10 minutes along rather than 20 minutes and coming in along Dip Falls Road. You would then pass the Dip Falls Reserve - the waterfall there is a feature - and the Big Tree Reserve with the existing Forestry Tasmania infrastructure around the big tree and the interpretation. You follow that road past the Waterwheel Creek tourism venture and the Blue Hills honey people. I am sure they would be just as happy with the road if it went straight past their door as if it went the other way, so we believe that is a viable option. That road network could then connect through, using existing road, to Tayatea Road just north of the Tayatea Bridge and come in over that access point, so there were other viable options. I am sure if we look at the maps we could come up with a range of other options.

Those options were not acceptable to Forestry Tasmania. We actually got no dialogue around alternative routing. We were told that they will either build the road as a tourist road or if they cannot get that then they will go ahead and build a logging road - now which would we prefer? That is not the basis to negotiate on. We were quite willing to look at what was a viable tourism offering and how we could make things work and avoid conflict on it. We spent 12 months trying to negotiate with Forestry Tasmania and then further with the Government. It was not until after the budget announcement where the Government had committed to the road in its current form that we actually took up a public campaign in the media. I think our group was very restrained in that first 12 months in making every possible opportunity to try and negotiate, rather than go to a campaign which inevitably ends up with people digging into positions and having the conflict that we currently have.

Mr GREEN - Scott, with respect to what you've just said about lack of negotiations with Forestry Tasmania, you make a point that somebody in Forestry Tasmania was saying to you, 'Look, we'll either build a tourist road or we'll build a logging road anyway'. What does that say to you with respect to the area that we're talking about where this road will go through? Is it set aside at the moment for logging?

Mr JORDAN - Some of it is and certainly we've been on the record as opposing logging within that area.

Mr GREEN - So it is set aside as a specialty timber area at this stage?

Mr JORDAN - Some of it currently is, yes.

Mr GREEN - The contentious area we are talking about; I put it to you that it is.

Mr JORDAN - Yes, parts of it.

Mr GREEN - As the result of a tourist road going through as opposed to a logging road, what's going to happen in that area?

Mr JORDAN - About 650 hectares will be reserved. To put that into perspective, within the proposed area that's been nominated for emergency heritage listing and the Tarkine national park proposal that's been on the table since 2004, there is 1 600 hectares within that area to be logged in the current three-year plan. So it's a small part of what's currently going under the chainsaw now and that only includes a three-year plan. It's also small when you consider 650 hectares compared to the fire that started off in the Western Explorer last year which burned out 18 000 hectares. So the risk that you have in putting that road through that area is that it's relatively protected. Without an external starter, you don't tend to get a lot of fire within rainforest. You get an odd lightening strike but the dampness tends to protect it. When you start driving cars through and drying areas out with roading and breaks, you create the potential for fire in the rainforest. Rainforest doesn't respond to fire in the way eucalypt forest does. If you get a rainforest fire the result is usually that it re-grows as eucalypt forest and it takes many years, it could be centuries, before you start to get true rainforest colonies coming back in.

Our position is that the area is reasonably protected by the fact that it's so remote and is not accessible at the moment. There are huge areas in the Tarkine that are accessible and suitable for tourism but there are some parts of it where we do need to say that if we want tourism in that area then go on foot and there are other parts that we can access in a car.

Mr GREEN - Was the Tarkine National Coalition happy with the result of the Tasmanian Community Forests Agreement, from the point of view of the reserves set aside? Your group was arguing that this was a large tract of temperate rainforest -

Mr JORDAN - Yes.

Mr GREEN - and it needed to be reserved. Were you happy with the reserve?

Mr JORDAN - We were happy with getting 70 000 hectares more reserve than we had the day before the agreement and certainly we've congratulated the State Government and the Federal Government on that position. Our long-term position has always been that we'd like to see a Tarkine national park of 447 000 hectares. That means there's currently about 70 000 hectares of eucalypt and rainforest within our proposed area that's still available for logging. We were certainly happy to get 70 000 hectares closer to that aim but we never saw that as the end of the game. We were quite clear with the State and Federal governments that our ask was bigger than we got, but we were grateful and we gave credit to both State and Federal governments for having the foresight to put 70 000 hectares more reserve on the table.

Mr GREEN - The point is, then, that an additional 70 000 hectares is in reserve. As a result of that, 170-odd people visit the area a year. You are also suggesting that it needs to go further than that. What I'd ask you to consider and perhaps respond to is that the Circular Head region has and continues to rely heavily on its timber industry as a source of income for people employed there, and tourism to a greater degree than it ever has before. Wouldn't you think that it's reasonable, under the circumstances, to compensate to a degree with respect to the income of the region and the diversity of employment?

Mr JORDAN - I am fully supportive of tourism in the area and the fact that we have engaged in the tourism development strategy. We have gone ahead and produced the brochure, and distributed 100 000 copies, as a catalyst for getting tourists into that area and showing them where they can go. We have also developed the bush-walking trail with Federal Government money at Philosopher Falls and at Mt Donaldson, which are fairly close to completion, and Waratah and down near Corinna.

As part of that process, and what is not public knowledge, is that in our approach to Forestry Tasmania as the land manager and to Parks as the other land manager in the area we went with a list of walks that we would like to develop. We said these are the options we would like to put in for Federal Government money to develop. We sat down with Mike Peterson and Mike Farrow at Forestry Tasmania at the time and said, 'What is acceptable to you?'. That is quite a different process from how we had this road presented. We were able to sit down with them and they were able to go down the list and say what is not acceptable and so we came up with a list of about five walks within Forestry Tasmania's area and another couple within Parks that were acceptable to Parks. They were what we submitted for and we got funded for two of those - Mt Donaldson and Philosopher Falls. Some of those areas were well within the Circular Head area though we obviously did not get funded for them. That was the decision of the Commonwealth Government.

Certainly we do not believe that you would see any fewer visitors travelling this road by entering it in via Dip Falls, being 10 minutes further along Bass Highway, or turning down at Smithton and accessing via either Tayatea or Kanunnah Bridge - 20 minutes further along the Bass Highway. We think it is a bit of a red herring argument that we need to cross the river at Meunna. Given the environmental damage, particularly to the Tasmanian devil, that could be caused by doing that we think it is reckless, particularly because it is unnecessary.

CHAIR - In terms of your opening comments about the Cradle Coast to develop a strategy, can I take you to a couple of comments that I see in there. One is that the strategy is not a definitive master plan. It attempts to fill gaps in our knowledge of tourism's place in the Tarkine - a starting point. It further goes on to say under 'Visitor Markets' that this is clearly an iterative process and that the brand will continue to evolve as we learn more about both the products and the market it seeks to address. Can I conclude from this document that the strategy never locked out a proposal such as the one the committee has to consider today?

Mr JORDAN - It is probably fair to say it did not name which projects should be winners and which should or should not get up, but it clearly chose not to include the road as part of the strategy. It was presented and lobbied heavily for by Forestry Tasmania to be included as a part of the strategy but it was felt that it did not meet the core principles that the strategy had sought out. It was identified very early on that the Tarkine needed to be about access via three visitor nodes so that it actually serviced the communities of the west coast, the Waratah-Wynyard area and the Circular Head area, but the road clearly did not meet that outcome. One of the advantages of taking it via Smithton and not building that controversial new section would be the money left over from the \$23 million that could be directed towards projects looking after visitor nodes at Waratah or at Corinna, and look after that west-coast community as part of the Tarkine picture. That was certainly our take on it.

I will move on now to the second question: is it economically sound? Again the answer to that was no. We spent a bit of time working through the two reports that Forestry Tasmania commissioned - the Moore report and the Felmingham report. What stood out was that both were based on some fairly flawed assumptions. The two reports both worked on assumptions of a visitor number which was predicated on the numbers developed by Moore Consulting relating to the Tarkine Tourism Development Strategy. At the time those numbers were produced, very early in that consultation phase, we didn't have the road on the table, so those numbers didn't relate to a road. So any attempt to argue that those numbers are appropriate to work out an economic value of the road is an exercise in circular logic. It's effectively saying that this many people come and visit, so if we build a road they will drive on it and therefore we create the benefit and the jobs are due to us. It's simply a flawed argument.

What the Tarkine Tourism Development Strategy said is that 1 100 jobs are going to be created from the visitors that come to the area, without factoring in a road. To take those numbers again and say that if they drive our road then how many jobs does that create, is circular logic. It's not based on independent work that asks how many extra tourists will come because we've built the road.

The other assumption that we were critical of was the assumption of investment expenditure. There seems to be no basis for how that figure was derived. I think Felmingham's report notes that his findings are predicated on those numbers as presented to him by Forestry Tasmania. Moore is probably not as outright in his statements but he hints that his investment numbers weren't investment numbers that came from him; they were investment numbers that were presented as part of the terms of reference. Both reports were framed in terms of assessing a west loop, an east loop or an entire road. This is the point that Mrs Napier made earlier on. We've effectively created a straw man scenario, particularly in terms of the east loop. We look at \$4.5 million of spending on

the east loop with no visitor infrastructure and no further private investment, and weigh that against a scenario where we put \$23 million into a road, another \$25 million which is unfunded - it hasn't been allocated but it needs to come from government coffers - and another \$60 million of private investment. Clearly, if you create a \$100 million-plus scenario and then you weigh it against the \$4.5 million scenario then it shouldn't be a surprise that this one wins. If you were to fairly look at it and ask what would you be investing in, the east loop is probably not the biggest job driver of the area but -

Mr GREEN - Under the Cradle Coast proposals, investment was required with respect to those loops as well.

Mr JORDAN - Absolutely, but the numbers weren't taken from the Cradle Coast report so we don't have a basis of where they come from. This is our point; we have created a straw man scenario where we put some investment numbers on the table that don't seem to have a basis and then we compare them against a poor investment opportunity, but we don't actually have any rationale for why people will invest in this one and not in that one. When we look at the west loop option of coming down from Smithton, it seems to discount the fact that you've already got all of the South Arthur Forest Drive attractions which are currently being visited. You would expect that if you upgrade just the west loop then you are going to increase the visitation of those sites and then do some infrastructure work. The comparative analysis of the Moore report and the Felmingham report almost assumes they are not there. So that raises questions about whether those reports can be considered accurate in terms of how we spend government funds if we're not actually going to compare them against real options.

In terms of the costings that were put up, initially the argument was that the \$23 million was possible because Forestry Tasmania could build roads 40 per cent cheaper than the State Government. We didn't accept that proposition. If it is true then perhaps we should get them out of the forestry business and get them into road building because the Government would save a fortune in roads statewide.

We are starting to see the blow-outs. We have seen today that about \$25.5 million is where the budget probably is at the moment. We had discussions with Phil and Gar a couple of days ago in my office in Burnie and they indicated that the visitor infrastructure at Tarkine Lookout and Tarkine Falls would now only consist of the road to it, the carpark and the first 100 metres of track. So we've gone from being full-blown visitor sites - and the rationale for putting the road through there - to getting a road but somebody else is going to have to build the sites. So why you are building the road there if you're not going to go ahead and build the sites?

The other issue, economically, is that no real analysis been done of the risk to the infrastructure in relation to the project. The Arthur River catchment has a fairly notorious record when it comes to taking away bridges. If you look at the Hilders Bridge site, it went about 20 years ago.

Mrs NAPIER - That was helped with some chainsaws, though.

Mr JORDAN - It's been helped by a lot of things along the way. The Farquhars Bridge site has obviously taken significant damage. Over the last 10 years you've seen Farquhars Bridge become unusable and the Blackwells Road Bridge, which is on the Hellyer

catchment feeding into the Arthur River, was wiped out. That was a concrete pylon bridge. I'm not sure whether you went to visit the Tayatea Bridge site and saw the damage there. It's a fairly substantial bridge and an awesome amount of force was required to knock it over. Similarly, the Savage River Pipeline Bridge was also taken out in 2007. If a risk analysis were done, would you be wanting to expend a large amount of government funds on a tourism strategy for the Tarkine that depended on bridges in locations that are subject to heavy flooding and log jams on a regular basis? The log jams are quite frequent on the Arthur River, most of it due to natural fall into the water, but also you've got logging further up the catchment, particularly in the Hellyer catchment area, so you do end up with an amount of debris joining those log jams, building up in the river. Every few years you get a large flood; it moves like a giant bulldozer and the first bridge it hits is gone.

So there needs to be a bit of thought put into risk analysis. If we create our Tarkine strategy based on a bridge at Meunna and, two years down the track, we have a flood and the bridge is gone, where does that leave our tourism strategy for the area? You are far better to go with the original Cradle Coast model of having three visitor nodes so that if you have an issue, whether it be a fire or a flood or whatever that damages one, the entire Tarkine industry isn't put on ice because of one of them.

Our final question was around whether it was environmentally sustainable. It's probably no surprise that we advocate a position that it's not. The road is likely to have significant effects on a number of threatened species. We commend the work that Andrew North did in terms of the assessment that formed part of the report for the EPBC assessment. We think he's done a fairly thorough job of identifying the impacts on species. We are still fairly critical of DIER's approach to mitigation. It seems to be a lot about putting in some management plans, coming up with some mitigation strategies, but we don't have anything hard and fast on the table. It all relates to doing further survey work and coming up with plans down the track. Particularly in terms of the impact on the Tasmanian devil, this is the last disease-free refuge. It's not an area where we want to try stuff. Whatever we put into place in the Tarkine needs to be proven beyond a doubt. We can't afford to be taking chances in that last refuge. We think that it's completely unsuitable. In the EPBC submission we've referred to that, that it's not appropriate to put in a submission lacking much of the survey work and then asking the government to come to a decision on whether or not it should proceed on the promise that we'll do the rest of that work later on. We need to be assessing exactly what's going to happen, knowing what those impacts are and whether those mitigation answers have been fully developed.

Particular issues around the bridges: there's talk in the EPBC referral about engineering the bridges in a way that would restrict access by devils. That's a fairly big task; devils are fairly small and agile creatures and generally speaking if you can get a car over a bridge there's a fair chance the devils will be able to get across as well. Cattle grates and those sorts of issues won't solve it; the devil will jump further than your car tyre can roll on, so it creates a lot of issues.

We suggested at our meeting with DIER the other day that they do have the bridge at Kanunnah and at Arthur River township and what would be appropriate for them at this point would be for them to look at what sort of mitigation measures they can put on those bridges as an attempt to trial some of their engineering solutions to see if they work. We

believe trialling, not only at those bridges but possibly also other bridges around the State to see if they can engineer a solution rather than just presenting that we believe we can do it and we'll come up with a plan later on, would be a better way to go about it.

CHAIR - Just on that matter, do you accept that the notion of the early contractor involved with the ECI process, given that this is evolving fairly quickly, necessarily has to build in measures like that but that the measures still have to be robust and have to be successful?

Mr JORDAN - We would have no problem with contractors coming in at an early stage in part of the design work but our issue is that the design work needs to be proven. It's not appropriate in this area to be trialling things; it's got to be proven technology. So what would be more appropriate is for some expenditure to happen in other areas or utilising the Kanunnah Bridge or the bridge at the Arthur River township as existing bridges in the area and with the extra benefit that if they do come up with a solution that works there they'd actually devil-proof two more bridges in the Tarkine which would certainly be a good outcome. To go ahead on the basis that we'll come up with our best guess, we'll build the thing and then we'll monitor it afterwards, runs the risk that if you monitor it later, you find it didn't work and the damage has been done.

Mrs NAPIER - Do you accept that modelling appears to have been done on the Dunalley Bridge?

Mr JORDAN - My understanding of the Dunalley Bridge is that the process hasn't been finished and so we're still unclear as to whether it's worked or not. Certainly, anything they learn with the Dunalley Bridge would be extremely useful. I guess, at this stage the advice we're getting from people involved in devil conservation, particularly in the science community, is that they're not holding a lot of faith in the Dunalley Bridge being successful so, the advice we're working from is that it's not going to be an answer. As a conservation group, our position is always going to fall on the side of providing the best outcome for a threatened species, so we think that far more work has to be done before a panel like this should be asked to sign off on a project.

Mr GREEN - Did you listen to the evidence on oath where it was said that there were at least 50 other crossing points on the Arthur River?

Mr JORDAN - I guess that'd surprise me that they found 50 points where you could cross the Arthur River. I would certainly concede that in a dry summer there would be points along that river where the river's partially crossable. I don't think you'd find any points in there where it's completely dry.

Mr GREEN - No.

Mr JORDAN - The people we spoke to believe that the Arthur River is an adequate barrier to keeping devils from crossing. They're certainly of the opinion that the bridges create opportunities for access.

Mr GREEN - What about the road from Waratah to Corinna?

Mr JORDAN - Certainly, that creates an access issue. Where the Waratah to Corinna road has a bit more of a margin of safety is that it tends to travel through an area of

predominantly rainforest. There are some buttongrass plains and there is some of the hill country in the middle of that road but at either end it's rainforest. The devils tend to range less in rainforest and so the capacity to travel is not as great through that area. Therefore the risk that has been presented is providing an access via a road that you get devils from outside of the area into the western sections. The highest population of devils is in that coastal strip. As well as the road from Corinna to Waratah you have also got that whole Murchison Highway front I guess where -

Mr GREEN - If that is the case that they are concentrated along the coast, what about the road from -

Mr JORDAN - From Smithton.

Mr GREEN - Yes, from Smithton to Marrawah.

Mr JORDAN - You have two existing bridges there. I do not think we are going to win public support for closing off bridges and it certainly would not be a good outcome for tourism. We have been quite clear that we think work needs to be done on those bridges in that we need to be finding out what works before the disease gets to those bridges so we can find a way to keep the devil out. I do not think they are there and I am not sure we are even close to having an outcome that devil-proofs the bridge so we would like to see that work commencing already.

The other advantage that Kanunnah Bridge obviously has is being further west, so it has a bit more time. But to be putting in a bridge at Meunna brings it that much closer to the area where the disease is. Currently the area along the north-west coast is disease-free but when we talk to the scientists they advise us that once the devil disease gets into that area, because of the large amount of farm land and the huge network of roads north of the Arthur River, it is likely to travel through that area fairly quickly. Certainly any approach from those farming districts north of the Arthur River has a higher level of risk than coming from the east through the rainforest section. Obviously the road comes into Corinna and you have got the Pieman River providing a fairly substantial barrier there in the south.

Mrs NAPIER - How do you respond to evidence we have received then that the travel west of the disease has basically halted now?

Mr JORDAN - It certainly has not halted. It has slowed and I guess there are differing views in the scientific community about why that is. There is a theory that there is a resistance in the western population. Cedric was the great hope that he had a resistance and he was from the western population and we were going to save some devils in the west.

Mr GREEN - That is the trouble - you are stopping them going east, mate.

Mr JORDAN - The problem with Cedric was we all thought it was the great hope and we held a lot of promise on it and then Cedric obviously fell to the disease and so it showed that, while the western population seems to be more resistant, they are not immune to it and so it might slow the transmission but eventually if it is given access it is going to

spread through that area. The other factor being that the devils tend to range less and population densities are less in the rainforest areas so that -

Mr GREEN - That is the reason.

Mr JORDAN - That strip along through the west without having a new road pushed through will provide a reasonable buffer and hopefully give us some time to come up with some sort of cure or immunisation or whatever the devil program is hoping to do. But the key factor has to be preserving that intact disease-free population in the meantime. It should be at the forefront of devil conservation.

Mr GREEN - Where did Cedric come from?

Mr JORDAN - He was taken from the west. I do not think he was from the Tarkine, I think he was from further south. The devils are certainly not the only environmental impact. The North report referred to six federally-listed threatened plant species and five fauna species. In terms of the plant species, obviously the road will have small impact on plants that are in the path of the road but there is the potential for the road to open up areas to additional risk of fire - and we saw that with the fire that started off the Western Explorer in previous years. Unfortunately, the north-west tends to have a lot of fire started through misadventure or deliberately lit fires and road access is a key component of where people start fires either inadvertently or otherwise. Some of those species that are used to a wet environment around a rainforest won't be as resistant to fire as others; certainly, that poses a large threat. Also, the potential transmission of phytophthora is another issue as well as the impact of weeds going through the area. You probably would have noticed as you travelled around a lot of the roads coming into the area that there's a high level of blackberry, this invasive weed, around the fringes of the Tarkine on some of the roads that go into it. Particularly at this time of year you would have seen a lot of foxglove along the sides of the road; it's probably not in flower yet but you would have seen a lot of it.

Mrs NAPIER - Yes.

Mr JORDAN - We've noted that wherever the roading goes, including some fairly new roading relating to some logging coupes recently, those areas with relatively new roads have already got foxglove sprouting all up the sides of them. I don't believe it's given enough credence as an environmental weed. It's not high on the list of weeds in terms of weed management but certainly within the Tarkine it's becoming a major nuisance, and particularly in roaded areas it's spreading wherever the roads go. There's no reason to believe that in pushing a new road through those areas, we won't be transmitting foxglove into those areas as well.

We note that, as a result of the construction of the Western Explorer, the fire risk has obviously been there and it stands out as something that needs to be carefully looked at when we look at a new road going in.

We also note that, as part of our normal operations, we involve ourselves with Mineral Resources Tasmania in mediation with various mining companies who put up applications for exploration licences. The normal process there is that they will lodge the application, it will go in the paper and you have 28 days to make a comment; we make a

representation to that and then some time over the next couple of months we sit down with staff from Mineral Resources Tasmania and the proponents and we conduct a mediation session where we work out what's an acceptable exploration program for them to take. We look at things like how they're going to access the area, what tracks they require, can they re-route and use existing tracks. It's been a very good process and there's a lot of information exchanged.

I guess it's quite different to the process we've had traditionally with Forestry Tasmania where there's no mediation that happens and, as a result of it, I think Mineral Resources Tasmania needs to be congratulated in that we haven't seen a conservation issue related to mining on the front page of a newspaper in Tasmania in quite a while. I think that mediation approach has been part of the reason for that; it allows us to put on the table our concerns and work with the relevant companies to look at how they can do what they need to do in a way that minimises impacts and comes to an acceptable outcome.

As part of that process, we were alerted by Mineral Resources Tasmania to the fact that the construction of the Western Explorer spread the phytophthora root rot disease an extra 12 kilometres. So that's certainly an issue that we have in relation to this new road; that it also has the potential to spread the phytophthora disease in that area. We don't think that the application by DIER has given adequate weight to that as an issue and certainly we hope to see far more detail on that before any sort of approvals are granted.

In terms of other fauna species, spotted-tailed quoll, eastern-barred bandicoot and wedge-tailed eagle have been identified as susceptible to impacts of road kill in the area; they're all threatened species. In addition to that, you have the swift parrot and orange bellied parrot that are transitory through the area. They feed in the area at times, and swift parrots have been known to nest in the area. They are probably not at risk as much from road kill but certainly when you look at issues of bringing the root rot disease into the area, and in particular fire risks, that creates issues for those species in terms of destruction of nesting habitat and feeding ranges.

The giant freshwater crayfish we feel needed more attention in the referral. We know that in the threatened species recovery plan for the giant freshwater crayfish they have identified roading as a key concern. The reason is that the biggest risk to the lobster is still poaching and any new roading increases the accessibility of people to get in and poach lobsters. It is acknowledged within the threatened species recovery plan that new roading poses a threat.

Mrs NAPIER - With all these new visitors they are going to have there will be so many people coming and going they will never get to the crayfish.

Mr JORDAN - We can hope but I suspect it would increase the amount of poaching in those areas by increasing the ability to get into those areas.

Additional to the risk of fire in the area is the illegal use of off-road vehicles. We found with the Western Explorer, and through a number of roads that Forestry have put in as part of their logging operations, that wherever you get new roading into the area you get a proliferation of tracks being formed by illegal off-road users. There are certainly tracks within the area that are designated for legitimate four-wheel-drive use and use by ATV owners and the like and we are certainly not taking a position that the road would

increase that - that is obviously done under a management plan that exists already. However, speaking with Parks staff over the years one of their biggest concerns along the coastal area in particular is that they have no capacity to control illegal off-road use. Damage in terms of opening areas up to fire risk as well as damage to sensitive vegetation is fairly significant. Once you get into the coastal areas there has also been considerable damage done to Aboriginal sites - middens and hut depressions and the like - as a result of illegal use of off-road vehicles and four-wheel drives in that area. The Aboriginal community have concerns about simply the number of visitors that will travel the road. Even in some of the non-controversial sections from an environmental point of view, without Parks being given significant increases in resources to manage those visitors, you create a scenario where you bring more people in -

Mrs NAPIER - You are talking about the Arthur River Road now?

Mr JORDAN - Along the Arthur River and the coast south of it. Certainly the road itself is less contentious than the other parts but without significant increases in resources to manage it, it will have its own problems. A key example of that are the camping grounds south of Arthur River. They are heavily used but for the last three years they have not had bins. Prior to that they had bins but Parks simply do not have the staff resources to change bins. So here we have a plan to build a road that potentially puts 100 000 more tourists on the coast yet we are not resourcing Parks with the staff to change bins. It's cart before the horse.

Mrs NAPIER - That would be a problem with the Cradle Coast too, wouldn't it?

Mr JORDAN - It is.

Mrs NAPIER - Threatened Species and Parks and Wildlife officers.

Mr JORDAN - Definitely. It certainly is a need. To be looking at any sort of infrastructure on this level, regardless of whether it is contentious environmentally, without first putting in that Parks allocation to manage it is putting the cart before the horse and it compromises the whole project.

Mr GREEN - In fact it is completely the opposite way around, in my humble opinion, because part of the problem with the issues associated with Aboriginal heritage on the west coast and in Tasmania generally is that there has never been any proper interpretation. A lot of that is based on economies of scale. I happen to think that is some of the most magnificent native people's heritage in the world; it is just unbelievable. If it was interpreted properly and handled properly then Parks probably would have more resources to do the work and certainly the Aboriginal community would benefit enormously for it. So I completely disagree with you.

Mr JORDAN - I certainly agree with the value of the area. It is recognised as one of the most significant areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage in the country.

Mr GREEN - It's staggering.

Mrs NAPIER - We need some people to look after it; that's the problem.

Mr JORDAN - But certainly the problem at the moment is that there's insufficient staff to manage it. The damage that's being done down there is horrendous, and in this day and age we're still standing by watching it happen. We should be putting more resources in now to manage what we've got through the area before we look at pushing the new road through. We have said we support a route that came in south of Smithton and went along that area but it certainly does need to be much better managed than it is now.

Mr GREEN - I think you're missing my point and so is Mrs Napier.

Mr JORDAN - I think you've got some great staff within Parks but they are severely under-resourced and they can't manage what they've got, so to put 100 000 more visitors there with this road without any additional staffing compromises them even further.

Mrs NAPIER - I think he's got a fair point, regardless of the road.

Mr GREEN - They can't manage it now because they can't get any money out of anyone.

Mrs NAPIER - Do you accept that, if access via Dip Falls road were to be used, there would be significant impact upon forestry operations because of the amount of plantation it goes through? We actually came out that way to have a look at that. Do you accept that the impact, economically, on forestry would be quite significant if that was the route that was used?

Mr JORDAN - We certainly didn't advocate that in that area north of the Arthur River; we've made no claim over it in terms of a park or a heritage listing. You certainly would drive past areas where there are plantations and at times those plantations would be logged. That's also true of areas coming in through Myalla and Meunna. For the sake of creating an access point we thought that was an acceptable option. Obviously the Kanunnah Bridge option doesn't have that issue. Once you come down from Smithton and you hit either Kanunnah Bridge or Tayatea Bridge then you are getting into a certain area. If you cross the bridge from Tayatea, you've got areas there that are still available for logging and don't sit within our national park proposal. They have been extensively logged in the past and we haven't made claim over the area around Tayatea Bridge.

The advantage of the Dip Falls option was that it passed two more attractions and we put it past a couple of tourism operators that potentially got an economic benefit out of it. If your option was to remove the visual impact of logging operations then the Smithton access is a better option. I think there are advantages, though, in sharing the benefits with operators along Dip Falls Road and sharing the two good attractions.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Scott.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW

Mr PHIL CANTILLON, Mr GAR FOONG, Mr MIKE PETERSON, Mr DION LESTER AND Mr RICHARD GERATHY WERE RECALLED.

CHAIR - Can we have Phil and your team back please because some questions which have arisen out of Scott's presentation.

Mr GREEN - The last witness gave us evidence that the process entered into by Cradle Coast Authority effectively got a consensus position around the table. Can anybody on the panel explain to the committee whether that is in fact the case or not and whether there was in fact a consensus with respect to the plan that Cradle Coast put forward?

Mr PETERSON - I was a member of the Cradle Coast Tourism Development Forum representing Forestry Tasmania. There were representatives from the local councils, Tourism Tasmania, Forestry Tasmania as land manager, Parks and Wildlife Service and various tourism bodies, and Tarkine National Coalition representing the conservation groups. I do not think there was any direct submission by any one party about what should happen. Cradle Coast engaged consultants to identify a range of options and projects and to undertake a latent demand analysis and cost profile, which was done by Moore Consulting and that group. Throughout the process there was a lot of discussion. Cradle Coast prepared a preliminary master plan which the various parties were invited to provide comment on but there was never a vote. Speaking from my knowledge of Forestry Tasmania's comment on the master plan, we certainly had reservations about some of the proposals and that was made quite clear to the Cradle Coast Authority.

We understand that many of the other parties to that forum also made similar submissions to the Cradle Coast Authority so there was never a vote. I do not believe it was a consensus document.

Mr GREEN - How long would the Cradle Coast Authority have been aware of the full loop proposal?

Mr PETERSON - Forestry Tasmania, principally myself, gave presentations to the forum. I cannot remember the dates but it was certainly in the order of about a year before they released their final document. There had been preliminary discussions about concepts and ideas. Within Forestry there was an internal process of approval which needed to be finalised before presenting publicly any proposals or concepts, and in large part they were concepts.

Mr GREEN - Did any other political party leading up to the finalisation of a plan for a full loop road have a plan to put a full loop road forward - a \$20 million commitment?

Mr PETERSON - Forestry Tasmania was asked by the Government to engage stakeholders and to present them with the concept. The presentations were made to councils, the Cradle Coast Forum and all the people who were there representing the tourism associations and the like. We also gave a presentation to the Tarkine National Coalition as a conservation group and many politicians on both sides of the spectrum. There were certainly presentations to the Liberal MHR for Braddon and various Labor people including yourselves. There was endorsement in September/October by the MHR for Braddon of the project, if that is what you asking.

Mr GREEN - Yes. So it is unreasonable to suggest that nobody knew about the project, a Johnny-come-lately with the process?

Mr PETERSON - No, certainly not.

Mr GREEN - The issue with respect to Tarkine Trails, you gave evidence to suggest that there had been extensive consultation. We have just heard that they are very upset about the process and -

Mr PETERSON - No, there has been extensive -

Mr CANTILLON - We met with Rob Fairlie a couple of times actually and it has been fairly positive - basically to understand the issue. It is a million-dollar-a-year business, the turnover, as I understand, so it is a fairly substantive business. They have been operating in the area since about 2004-05 on that five-day walk-through tour of the Tarkine area. I understand that in May of this year FT advised Tarkine Trails of a number of mineral leases in the vicinity of the Tarkine Falls area, in that border area, that would now preclude them from developing an accommodated walk on that route area, which they were using up until then.

Mr PETERSON - Can I just interrupt here? That is probably incorrect. What happened was that Forestry Tasmania received a proposal from Tarkine Trails to go to the next step in terms of the development of the rainforest track. They have been licensed since 2005-06. They had been operating beforehand and that licence was to utilise a route. There was to be no development along the track other than some minor clearing of campsites and some obstructions along the route. It was only ever to be a ribbon-taped track between the Forestry roads which they were using. Their trail is 26 kilometres long. The bulk of it, some 17 or 18 kilometres, utilises old forestry roads and there is only in the order of 8 kilometres where they walk through the rainforest section. It is basically walking from two ends of a road and doing a link across with the forest. It is taped but the licence clearly states there is to be no infrastructure development.

What they asked us a year or two back was to consider a proposal to construct standing camps. They were looking to invest a considerable sum of money with some potential partners and Forestry Tasmania advised them that that would involve quite an assessment process - an environmental assessment, presenting business plans and the like. As a requirement of that process in terms of our State forest activity assessment process, a process that any operator has to go through if they want to do any commercial development or put any structure in State forest, there is a very clear process that is based on the Parks and Wildlife Service reserve activity assessment process. We have adopted a similar thing. Forestry Tasmania advised them that we would have to consult with other interests in that area. That includes MRT, because their current track actually passes through exploration licences and the retention licences, which encompass the magnesite ore bodies. MRT came back and said that there was a likelihood that the retention licences would be converted to a mining lease and that a walking trail through the mining lease was incompatible. So for that reason the company has been advised that in the near future it's likely that they won't be able to utilise the existing route. Forestry Tasmania has worked quite closely with Tarkine Trails over the last three or four months in identifying an alternative route to the west of the pipeline, which MRT

have agreed is outside the likely zone of mineralisation. So we're looking at a concept for an alternative rainforest track west of the pipeline, with a starting point somewhere near where the short spur goes down to the Tarkine Lookout and the Tarkine Falls. When we were at the lookout yesterday and we looked back down towards the Pipeline Road, just to the west of that there is what has been identified as a possible take-off point for this new track. It will be west of the pipeline so there will be no need for the public to have any interaction with Pipeline Road in the future. That's one of the requirements that Grange Resources actually asked for as well.

CHAIR - And it will be in the reserve area, Mike?

Mr PETERSON - It will be fully within the State forest reserve. I've spoken with Parks and Wildlife Service about one little bit of the regional reserve that I believe the track should go to. One of the features of the new track is to have the end point or the turnaround point as being Mount Bertha, which is quite a significant feature in the landscape and you get magnificent views from the top of it. So you would spend a day or two walking in the rainforest, eventually come out onto a buttongrass mountain, just a short walk to the summit, and then you would walk back through rainforest on almost a parallel route but several kilometres apart, taking in other vegetation types. In essence a closed loop has been proposed at this time. That is probably an area that is compatible. Through negotiation with Grange we hope to arrange some access for provisioning and servicing of the track in the future, though very much controlled access. Then all the public use of the track will be entirely within the reserve and managed by Forestry Tasmania.

CHAIR - And a comparable experience to that which they get now?

Mr PETERSON - That's what we're expecting, yes, certainly.

Mr HALL - It's an existing four-day experience and it is only 26 kilometres?

Mr PETERSON - The new track might be an extra one or two kilometres - so 28.

Mr HALL - Right, and that's four days?

Mr PETERSON - It's three or four days. It depends on how fast you walk. A lot of the walk is in myrtle rainforest, open callidendrous forest. There is quite a range of different vegetation types.

Mr HALL - The clientele base is only about 70 per annum at this stage?

Mr GREEN - I don't know how it adds up to a million dollars.

Mr HALL - Yes, I'm just trying to work that one out.

Mr PETERSON - The total number of clients the year before last I recall as being something in the order of 260 clients. The rainforest track is only one of four or five tracks or packages that they market. From the calculations we did based on their client data, which they need to provide to us, the rainforest track is about 24 per cent or something of their total revenue stream.

Mr GREEN - What is their best track?

Mr PETERSON - They have one where they go into another forest reserve, the Boko Forest Reserve. They go to Boko Road, into the Huskisson River, then they come back out, go into Waratah, then Philosopher Falls and down to Corinna. They then take a boat trip to the heads. They have a campsite several kilometres north of the Pieman Heads along the beach. They then backtrack out, drive the Western Explorer to Jeff King's place at Arthur River and then they depart for the airport or whatever. I understand that is their most popular.

Mrs NAPIER - What was assessment of the impact of taking the Dip Falls Road?

Mr PETERSON - In developing the options for any kind of access to the rainforest corridor in particular, we spent quite a lot of time looking at various routes. Initially we were considering Farquhars Road through Farquhars Bridge but that meant that if we wanted to link through to Pipeline Road that needed agreement of Grange Resources, but also considerable new roading through probably the more pristine wilderness zones of the rainforest. So that was discounted as an option fairly early in the piece. Also it had complications with the potential for the magnesite mine development.

We looked further north. There was the Hilders option, which Forestry did a lot of analysis on and was received by the Forestry executive. In the options of going further north, we considered coming to Phantom Valley and going out through Rabalga Track to link across to Newhaven. In discussion with Richard Summers, he saw that as creating noise issues for his development at the Lodge. Also there is a lot of plantation development through that area. A lot of money was spent there by both the Federal and State governments in the RFA and TCFA. To come from Mawbanna down to Dip Falls and then link across on the route that we took yesterday, there are lots of topographic constraints in terms of rivers and creek lines. It would certainly compromise extensive areas of plantation, some of it quite well advanced now. A lot of it was put in the late 1990s and Forestry Tasmania has expended a lot of money on pruning. It is being managed for our future sawlog resource for veneer and solid timber so it is one of our key wood production areas.

Throughout Mawbanna Road there is a lot of private property which in recent times has been purchased by private timber companies who have put that into plantation. You saw on the drive out yesterday the extensive nature of the commercial forestry in that area. It is an area that is very productive and there are many tens of millions of dollars invested in that area already. To put a tourist corridor through there would significantly compromise wood production and there would be lots of interaction between tourist traffic and log traffic. The route that is being recommended avoids that in large part.

Mrs NAPIER - Regarding the potential to exacerbate the impact of phytophthora in the environs, what would your response be to that?

Mr LESTER - Firstly, comparison with the damage caused by the construction of the Western Explorer is probably not useful because that was built in 1995 and the construction techniques and understanding of how to construct have changed quite dramatically. DIER has demonstrably managed the phytophthora risk elsewhere in the State on numerous occasions. I mentioned the examples earlier on of Sisters Hills and

the Dip Range Regional Reserve. There is a well-established protocol for dealing with phytophthora - wash-down et cetera. There will be a detailed management plan prepared to deal with that and ensure it is covered through the construction phase.

Mr PETERSON - Phytophthora already exists along most of the length of the Pipeline Road. So it has already been introduced into the area some considerable time ago.

CHAIR - Thanks again, gentlemen; we appreciate your time.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW