

# PUBLIC

**THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON WEDNESDAY 20 OCTOBER 2021**

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## **TASMAN HIGHWAY - HOBART AIRPORT TO MIDWAY POINT CAUSEWAY**

**Mr HOWARD MITCHELL**, NETWORK PLANNER, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH, and **Mr SVEN MEYER**, PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM LEADER, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** - I need to make you aware of something that is very important and that is in respect to parliamentary privilege. Before you give evidence today I would like to inform you of some of the important aspects of committee proceedings. Firstly, that it is being recorded and it is important for you to understand a committee hearing is a proceeding in parliament. This means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege.

This is an important legal protection that allows individuals giving evidence to a parliamentary committee to speak with complete freedom without the fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place out of parliament. It applies to ensure that parliament receives the very best information when conducting its inquiries. It is important to be aware that this protection is not accorded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside the confines of the parliamentary proceedings.

As I said before, it is a public hearing. Members of the public and journalists may indeed be present. This means your evidence may be reported. Do you understand?

**Messrs MITCHELL and MEYER** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. You may like to make an opening statement before we examine your submission.

**Mr MEYER** - Good afternoon, my name is Sven Meyer. I'm the project manager with State Roads responsible for the delivery of the Hobart Airport Interchange to Midway Point Causeway Project. With me today is Howard Mitchell, network planner and project client for the project. Today we are seeking approval for the Tasman Highway Hobart Airport to Midway Point Causeway project. The project involves upgrading of 2.7 km of the Tasman Highway between the new Hobart Airport interchange and the Midway Point Causeway to four lanes; consolidation of multiple access points into a single intersection controlled by traffic signals; an extension of a separated shared path along the northern side of the highway.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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has a significant benefit-cost ratio so, in conclusion, this project is a good use of taxpayers' money.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. We will move to the submission. In an effort to not duplicate things, I think we will move to point 2, the project scope, bearing in mind that if members have questions on the first couple of pages, we'll cover those as we move through.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**CHAIR** - So the Midway Point solution is traffic lights?

**Mr MEYER** - Traffic signals, yes.

**CHAIR** - Traffic signals. It's not going to cause too many hold-ups, is it? Even if it's four lanes, is it still going to be a pinch point?

**Mr MEYER** - No. There's a certain amount of traffic in Penna Road and Tasman Highway. The best solution we have, in two discrete areas with similar amounts of traffic, is traffic signals. At the moment, where they've got a roundabout, you have the Penna Road traffic coming down, and then the Tasman Highway has to give way to Penna Road, so traffic signals are the best we have for those sorts of arrangements.

**CHAIR** - The junction at - what is it called, the road just past the airport?

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**Mr MEYER** - Pittwater Road.

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

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

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

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

**Ms BUTLER** - Under 2.2, Options Evaluation, you referred to bus services from Hobart to Sorell and Midway Point being significantly improved. Could you give us an idea of how they have been significantly improved?

You also state in the submission that other efficiency initiatives, such as common ticketing and bus priority lanes, are under investigation. Can you provide some information on your progress with that?

The reason for these questions is that public transport is quite sporadic between Sorell and Hobart, with a large population. Has the public transport option been identified and properly explored as an investment in this area?

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

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

We are putting in new bus shelters and pull-over locations for the buses, and investigating a park and ride facility -

**Ms BUTLER** - That was my next question. Along that stretch, are there any bus shelters and bus stops, and will there be potential problems for people trying to enter and exit because of a wider barrier in the middle?

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**Mr MEYER** - No, there won't. In the Hobart Airport interchange project, we're putting new bus facilities connecting to walkways to the Hobart Airport and Clarence municipality walkways, and in Midway Point we are putting in new bus facilities with connections to the walkways. We're investigating a park and ride at Midway Point. Between those two locations, there's no real need for people to get on and off the buses; there's no real housing density or anything else.

**Ms BUTLER** - There are no bus stops along this construction area?

**Mr MEYER** - There are none.

**Mr MITCHELL** - The only other thing I can add is the department, in November, will be starting a study into how to construct transit lanes along the Tasman Highway, but they'll be from the Cambridge interchange through to the approach to the Tasman Bridge. We'll be looking at how to put in transit lanes through that stretch on the Tasman Highway.

We need to look at whether that transit lane is in the inside or outside of the road, and how we achieve the extra road width. Do we do it by widening the shoulders, or are there sections where we can eat into the median area between the carriageways?

**Ms BUTLER** - For the record, can you define what 'transit lane' means?

**Mr MITCHELL** - It will be there to increase bus priority, to allow them to get ahead of the queue, but it may end up being a T3 transit lane, where three or more people in a car can travel in that lane. The actual definition of transit lane for that section of the Tasman Highway hasn't been decided.

**Ms BUTLER** - When is that work starting to happen?

**Mr MITCHELL** - We are starting a concept design study in November this year and it will probably wrap up by the middle of next year. It was one of the things that was recommended in our Sorell to Hobart corridor plan as a high priority, to look those transit lanes. We're starting to look at how we would put those in place, because we recognise that giving buses or trying to eat back that travel time advantage between cars and buses is important.

You lose a bit of time waiting for a bus. If we can put in priority measures to get the buses ahead of the queues of cars, that helps people jump on a bus.

**Ms BUTLER** - That's part of it. It's making the public transport option easy and accessible and therefore trying to take cars off the road.

**Mr MITCHELL** - I know our PT branch is working on the common ticketing project, but I don't have any information on the status of that.

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

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

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**Mr ELLIS** - Maybe sections of the Bass Highway, I would have thought, where that goes to two.

**Mr MEYER** - There might be sections, yes.

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

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

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

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

**CHAIR** - Going back to the options evaluation, in the summary at the beginning you talk about five options. Can you outline what those five were? I know you've dealt with three of them on the next page. For those that are here listening and for members of the public who might be listening, can you tell us what those five options were?

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

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

**CHAIR** - With that option?

**Mr MEYER** - That was the two options.

**CHAIR** - No, with the first. The 100 kilometre per hour use mentioned, with the Milford property. Can you expand on that?

**Mr MEYER** - There were very high-level options, the first two, at 100 kilometres per hour. Then we looked at two options at 80 kilometres per hour.

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**CHAIR** - I think you missed my point.

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

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

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

**CHAIR** - And the second option?

**Mr MEYER** - 100 kilometres per hour with more acquisition on the Milford side. The second option was similar but more acquisition on the Tasmania Golf Club side.

**CHAIR** - And the third option?

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

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

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

**CHAIR** - Was that 80 or 100 kilometres per hour?

**Mr MEYER** - That was at 80 kilometres per hour.

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

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

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

**CHAIR** - So is that Option 5, is it?

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**Mr MEYER** - That is Option 5. Correct.

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

**Mr MEYER** - That's right.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Mr MEYER** - Yes, we do.

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

**CHAIR** - Out of the 20.

**Mr MEYER** - Out of the 20.

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

**CHAIR** - Because of growth in -

**Mr MEYER** - Midway Point and Sorell.

**Mr TUCKER** - A question following on from that, Chair, that we should put on record.

You are saying that once it gets to 17 000, I think, you go to a double lane highway.



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**Mr MITCHELL** - That is a typical rule of thumb.

**Mr TUCKER** - A typical rule of thumb. Going on your comment just then, how many cars of dual lane traffic before we trigger that we have to go bigger again?

**Mr MITCHELL** - I do not know that number.

**Mr MEYER** - In saying that, wouldn't it be double?

**Mr MITCHELL** - It could be that, yes.

**Mr MEYER** - But you're not exactly sure.

**Mr ELLIS** - Can I ask about the policy to use existing corridors and to not open new corridors rather upgrade existing? What is the thinking behind that? Is it purely dollars and cents? Why do we have that as a policy?

**Mr MEYER** - That is not always the way. I guess an example is the Sorell bypass. That is what we call a greenfield site. In that location we had a corridor that had been on the plans for 20 years. We always thought that Sorell got to a certain volume, and the southern beaches, that you would have this bypass arrangement, which is what we are currently constructing.

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

**Mr ELLIS** - Is there something that would trigger an approach for a new corridor? I know you have spoken about the Sorell bypass, but in less populated areas are we talking just purely bypasses or are there other things that the department looks at for new corridors?

**Mr MEYER** - We do look at all those options. There are spots in the north-west and other areas where we have looked at alternate corridors. It depends how constrained the corridor currently is and if there are significant amounts of acquisition and impacts to landholders and businesses and it may be a better outcome to looking at alternate corridors.

**Mr MITCHELL** - When we are looking at alternate corridors, it does come down to how much traffic would use that alternate corridor compared to how much it would cost us to build it and what environmental, Aboriginal heritage, and all the sort of geotechnical issues we would face by building a bypass. So, what risks the department would take on if we were building a bypass, compared to the benefit to the community, they are the kind of things we weigh up when we do feasibility studies on different bypass routes.

**Mr ELLIS** - Would it be fair to say that an existing corridor could almost kill the business case of a lot of these new corridors because there would be a certain proportion of people that would continue to use the existing corridor once there is a bit less traffic on that corridor anyway?

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**Mr MITCHELL** - Yes, that's right. If you provide an alternative corridor maybe 50 per cent continue to go the way they have always done and 50 per cent prefer the new corridor. It might just depend what attractions are along each of the different roads.

**Mr MEYER** - So, I guess up in the north of the state, the Perth bypass is probably the best example where we created a greenfield new alignment for a road.

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

**Mr MEYER** - We received significant submissions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**CHAIR** - While we are on that, we probably will talk about it again later because we have submissions from members of the public who will present to us and I will give them the opportunity as a committee to present to us, and we will have other questions, so we will ask you to come back to the table once they have addressed their submissions because there will be questions that we need to ask. But just with respect to the threatened species - and I think I don't need to tell you how threatened these species are - it is the only place in the world that it grows, one of them. Another of them there are only two places and I think part of that is at Dodges Ferry and not that's not in a very good situation, so understanding the criticality of this vegetation, with this option that you have chosen, how have you designed the limited impact that you believe that this option has to make sure that those orchid communities aren't overtly impacted?

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

**CHAIR** - How far would the main, let's say, where the drainage channels are, taking stormwater - I think you call them swales - how far are those swales away from the orchid communities as far as you're aware?

**Mr MEYER** - I think there's a number of drains but because the stormwater's currently there, the rainfall doesn't change, the number of vehicles doesn't change. Essentially, we've just extended those drains because changes to moisture can potentially change the impact to the orchids, so we haven't changed that arrangement. You can do studies for years and essentially you might not know what the impact to the orchids is, so our assessment was best to leave things as they are and just to increase the culvert length.

**CHAIR** - There's no further ingress into Milford, as far as the drainage channels are concerned, is that what you're saying?

**Mr MEYER** - No. The culverts will connect onto the existing drainage channels.

**CHAIR** - It's not taking up more land to look after drainage? Is that a fair comment?

**Mr MEYER** - Well, there's always - because it's going from two lanes to four lanes, you have the drainage swales but it doesn't take up significantly more land, no.

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**CHAIR** - Okay.

**Mr TUCKER** - Seeing as you've gone down that path, Chair, I was waiting for the next page. With all the options, basically option two and the preferred option, you talk about the orchid. I want to talk a little bit about the dry viminalis coastal forest. There are 40 hectares there that are obviously locked up and that would be across on the other side of the road there, where the golf course is. Is that correct, or is that wrong?

**Mr MEYER** - I guess before the golf course was there, the Milford forest would have extended across to the golf club and then it may well have been orchid habitat there before the golf club. I'm not sure how long they've been there, say 50 years, I don't know exactly. So, there are a number of remaining large trees on the golf club, which are very similar sorts of trees to Milford forest. But there's no underlying - it doesn't meet the criteria for a vegetation community. But there are significant trees still on the golf club and some of those will need to be removed.

**Mr TUCKER** - That forest type has been investigated but what you're saying they're across both sides?

**Mr MEYER** - Yes, that's right. We did a thorough investigation of the communities on both sides of the highway. It's all part of an Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) referral that we've got ongoing with the Commonwealth at the moment. It's all been assessed, mapped and managed.

**CHAIR** - To that point, the EPBC referral doesn't necessarily take into account certain species that are within the jurisdiction of Parks, but we might get to that a bit later because it comes up in one of the submissions.

Any questions on the following page, where we had the options there that are laid out, all three of them?

The social pinpoint or online feedback page that was established, as you say here, and this was live during the engagement period, how responsive was the public to that?

**Mr MITCHELL** - Through that social pinpoint site, 155 surveys were completed. The responses came from 35 different postcodes; 54 per cent of those were in the Midway Point/Sorell/southern beaches areas. The respondents raised concerns about road usage as part of the corridor; 104 respondents were concerned about congestion; 84 respondents were concerned about traffic volumes; 55 respondents were concerned about safety; 53 respondents were concerned about speed; 52 respondents were concerned about the impact on the vegetation values; and a further 26 respondents were concerned about, generally, access to the highway and impacts on the golf course.

When they were looking at whether they preferred option 1, which impacted more on Milford, compared to option 2, which impacted more on the golf course - these are the southern and northern roundabout options - 75 respondents preferred option 1, impacting on Milford, and 65 respondents preferred option 2, impacting on the golf course, so a fairly even split between option 1 and option 2 for the people who filled in those surveys.

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I guess 85 of the respondents used the highway daily, 46 respondents used it weekly, 10 monthly and 15 occasionally. That's the summary we've got of the response in that social pinpoint survey.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. I really appreciate that. As far as where you put posters and outlining the projects - and you talk about at the golf club, you talk about Inghams Chickens and the Sorell Council chambers; did you think about putting them in shopping strips and service stations and supermarkets, where you get a lot of people?

**Mr MITCHELL** - Yes, we did, actually.

**CHAIR** - You did?

**Mr MEYER** - We did it at the Woolworths and at the Coles facilities. We also did the Sunday market - we put up a little stand as well. We tried our best as we could to capture everyone.

**CHAIR** - That's good.

**Mr MEYER** - Yes, and we had a number of drop-in sessions at our halls down at Dodges Ferry, Sorell and Midway Point, so it was pretty comprehensive.

**CHAIR** - How were they advertised, the drop-ins?

**Mr MEYER** - Public notices. There were direct letter drops to impacted parties, through the social pinpoints and on our webpage and Facebook.

**CHAIR** - Thank you for that.

**Mr TUCKER** - Diseases and weeds with the building of the road - and I'm thinking particularly around phytophthora, how would that be managed?

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

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

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

**CHAIR** - With respect to - and I appreciate the question about phytophthora, a pretty nasty beast when it comes to what it can do to plants: one of the other aspects that was brought out was to do with the management of the verges and consideration that quite often herbicides are used. Shedding off could damage the orchid community, for instance. Can you give us an understanding as to what would be done to stop that from occurring, or is there something already in place that stops herbicide usage in that area?

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

**Mr TUCKER** - The material, the aggregate for the road, how far do we allow contractors to cart that material on those roads? I am thinking of trucks on roads and things like that. Is it close by, or will it be coming from a long distance away? Can we stipulate that?

I was thinking about Marrawah Road, where they carted it from Sheffield. That, in my calculations, is probably \$50 a tonne to cart it. I am interested in whether we would put any restrictions on that with this road, and with the maintenance of our roads, putting that number of trucks across it.

**Mr MEYER** - We don't enforce that. It's up to the contractor to source quarry material. It has to be from a registered quarry, and there's a registration process as part of our specifications. They have to go through quite extensive criteria to make sure it's suitable aggregate. In some instances, perhaps like the one you mentioned, there might not have been a quarry nearby that met that criteria, which is why they sometimes do have to cart quite long distances.

**CHAIR** - One last question on the 100 kilometres per hour and 80 kilometres per hour speeds. Do you often have circumstances where you have traffic lights in a 100 kilometres per hour zone across the state? Is that the main reason for having it at 80 kilometres per hour?

**Mr MEYER** - Generally, you wouldn't have traffic lights on a 100 kilometres per hour highway. For the Hobart Airport Interchange, which is 100 kilometres per hour, that's why we've designed the overpass/underpass arrangement, so you can continue at speed.

Generally, you would start using traffic signals more at 80 kilometres per hour. At roundabouts it needs to be lower; it gets down to 60 kilometres per hour or 40 kilometres per hour. You need to decrease the speed before entering the intersection if it was at 100 kilometres per hour.

**CHAIR** - Where is the speed going to decrease from? You have the overpass at the roundabout with the through-traffic going over the top. Would you be decreasing it at that point, or further up?

**Mr MEYER** - Slightly past it, where the off and on routes would come on, where they all merge together. That's where it would go back to 80 kilometres per hour, which is similar to where the 80 kilometres per hour is now.

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**CHAIR** - As part of the scope, you mention a separated cycleway. I have always rabbited on about the need to incorporate cycleways for cyclists.

**Mr MITCHELL** - Advocated with passion would be a kinder way to say it.

**CHAIR** - It's encouraging to see that in this solution. At least, you seem to have done that. Was there a particular reason why that occurred? Do you have the numbers of cyclists who use this area, and is that the reason why it's being considered?

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

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

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

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

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

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

**CHAIR** - It's bidirectional.

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

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

**Mr MITCHELL** - I think part of the reason is that when it gets to McGee's Bridge, all the fishing is done on the southern side. If we provide a cycleway on the northern side, it will

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separate it from where the people fishing are. It was also in our heads that we would duplicate the western causeway first. That solves the problem straight away.

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

**Ms BUTLER** - Who's responsible for the upkeep and the upgrade of that cycleway?

**Mr MEYER** - Currently the State Government, but we see if we can transfer that to each council area. The other major reason we did it on the northern side because where the Hobart Airport is and the current highway, we couldn't encroach into the airport apron on the southern side at that location. It had to be on north there, and we wanted it to continue on the same side all the way through.

**CHAIR** - You have Milford on the other side.

**Mr MEYER** - That's right.

**Ms BUTLER** - Would that cycleway still be owned by the State Government, but potentially maintained by local government?

**Mr MEYER** - Yes, that's how it works.

**CHAIR** - It's a bit of a two-edged sword, isn't it? When you get to the causeway, it's the side the spray comes on when it's pretty rough weather. It's an interesting one.

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

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

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

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

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

**CHAIR** - You wouldn't go on the highway, would you? I'm assuming you'd go over Tunnel Hill.

**Mr MITCHELL** - Yes, that's the way I've ridden in the past, through Cambridge and then over to Rosny, over Tunnel Hill.



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**CHAIR** - Perhaps, whenever you look at the Eastern Outlet again, you might think about how you can have a direct route - a cycleway that connects up.

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

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

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

**Mr TUCKER** - The Richter scale, what is it? One to ten, or -

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

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

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

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

**Mr MEYER** - Yes. The morning peak coming in, is bumper-to-bumper traffic. People are doing less than 20 kilometres per hour, from Midway Point through to Hobart Airport before you get to the four lanes. It's the same in the afternoon peak coming back. Once we build the four lanes all the way through it will be as per the current traffic arrangements, they'll be free-flowing all the way through. I don't know the travel time impacts for those peak periods.

**CHAIR** - I suppose if those pinch points didn't exist, the travel times might not be that different. There might be a few minutes lost here and there but, certainly, not huge.

**Mr MITCHELL** - I guess, to remove those pinch points you'd have to be putting in grade-separated facilities at Midway Point. I can imagine just the ramps and things involved would take out half of all the houses in that vicinity, to create a grade-separated solution there. I don't think it's that practical to imagine we could remove a pinch point at Midway Point without some serious acquisition.

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**Ms BUTLER** - There will be a pinch point or a bottleneck of sorts from where the new four-lane section goes into the existing two-lane causeway. For the record, how long will that bottleneck be there, until that causeway is complete and it links up to the four-by-four? That will not be able to provide those economic benefits with the cost-benefit ratio until that's complete, I imagine.

**Mr MEYER** - We have received Tasmanian and Australian Government funding for the causeway duplications. We're currently investigating those works. There are, as you'd imagine, quite a few environmental and design issues we need to work through for those causeways. At the moment, the program is from 2023 to 2025. This particular project, if it commenced as planned in May next year, would be completed at the end of 2023 which is essentially when the causeway works would start.

**Ms BUTLER** - Okay. And that's both causeways, to be completed by 2025?

**Mr MEYER** - Yes, that's correct.

**Ms BUTLER** - Okay.

**CHAIR** - A question about the cost-benefit analysis on this. I know it is a government policy that this project happens. It has obviously gone through its cost-benefit processes to get to this point. Are those reports that provide that analysis publicly available?

**Mr MEYER** - Yes, they are. The project proposal reports are in the Australian Government web site.

**CHAIR** - Okay. Thank you. Other questions on scope?

**Ms BUTLER** - I apologise - I have a question about the wire rope safety fence in the middle. I asked this previously this morning, but for the record, is there a way for there not to be a wire rope safety fence on this project; was that looked at; and why was the decision made for there to be a wire rope safety fence?

**Mr MEYER** - When you have high volumes of traffic, and speeds often above 80 kilometres an hour, especially when you have two lanes in each direction, a lot of the significant impacts are head-on collisions. You would have seen that, especially on the Midlands Highway where people travel at 100 kilometres an hour and there's not much lighting. In this location it is not going to be 100, it is going to be 80; but you have significant volumes of traffic, so the potential for people to run off the road is quite high.

It has been proven numerous times that having a safety rope barrier in the middle prevents that head-on collision, which has significant savings to people's lives and impacts like that. There is no reason in this situation not to put in a central wire barrier, because we are trying to centralise all the intersection and access arrangements. There are, essentially, no movements from one side of the road to the other side of the road, so there is no reason why you wouldn't put in the wire rope barrier to protect lives.

**Ms BUTLER** - We might go back to it later on, because I believe a wire rope barrier was mentioned in the airport submission.

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**CHAIR** - Yes, when it comes to access for airport vehicles.

**Ms BUTLER** - For their vehicles off Pittwater as well I think; so maybe we might come back to that later, Chair.

**CHAIR** - We could. I am interested in pursuing it a little bit. I have to declare a bit of interest: I'm a motorcyclist and there are a lot of motorcyclists who don't like these things at all. We have had this discussion a few times at this committee. Indeed, there's gathering evidence that people can get harmed when they exit a motorcycle into a wire rope fence. Did you consider at all concrete barriers up the centre?

**Mr MEYER** - The reason we don't use concrete road barriers is that it's a solid, hard surface. If vehicles ran off the road they would smash into that and cause harm. The wire rope barriers have a fair bit of give in them; the vehicle hits the wire barrier and it still moves within one to two metres and bounces back. It doesn't get them across the highway, it doesn't impact the other vehicles, but it lessens the impact to the vehicle and potentially lessens the impact to the occupants in that vehicle.

**CHAIR** - As I say, you balance it with someone losing their life, that's the only thing. If you are an individual on a motorbike - or a bike for that matter - I know that is going to be separated so that won't happen there. Anyway, I wanted to cover that.

**Mr ELLIS** - I note that one of the sections on the Midland Highway that this committee recently looked at separating with a wire rope barrier, I think there was a crash just south of Campbell Town head-on only four days ago or so. No separation between it just adds to these sad situations.

**CHAIR** - I don't think anyone is arguing that there shouldn't be a centre barrier of some sort, it's just the type.

**Ms BUTLER** - And the reasoning behind it.

**CHAIR** - There's a lot of lobbying going on with it in relation to that. Obviously, it's a policy decision to do it and I think it's also as much about long-term maintenance of wires and posts, as opposed to concrete barriers.

**Ms BUTLER** - I think the Hobart Airport submission's concern was would the wire barrier stop them from being able to access Pittwater Road, making sure that they were compliant with standards around safe zones around the actual airport itself. Was that addressed when you were doing the design around Hobart Airport?

**Mr MEYER** - Can you explain the question a little bit?

**Ms BUTLER** - In the submission from Hobart Airport, which I believe was looked at, there was concern around whether or not - in a case of a rescue firefighting service requiring unimpeded road access to the actual Milford property - whether or not the wire barrier on the new highway would impede that access? Was that investigated and looked at as part of the design?

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**Mr MEYER** - There's a current fire access track that goes around the boundary of Milford property and there's a current gate to that access track on the Tasman Highway. This project is looking at relocating that gate on Pittwater Road, so the firetrucks would then have to go through the traffic signals and then go down Pittwater Road and then go through that gate.

**CHAIR** - Rather than continuing east and then going across the road into that current access point?

**Mr MEYER** - Correct, yes.

**Ms BUTLER** - Do we know if Hobart Airport are satisfied with that design?

**Mr MEYER** - To my knowledge I don't think we've had any discussions with Hobart Airport about access to Milford property.

**Ms BUTLER** - All right. Thanks.

**CHAIR** - We'll leave that until Mr Cocker presents to us. You might have further questions to answer on that. What the project will achieve. You talk about three existing junctions that are heavily congested and subject to long wait times, obviously addressing that. We've talked about the golf club and we've talked about restructuring that. Rock and a hard place stuff, I suppose. Obviously, you've got a major threatened species to consider, that's only there - the only place in the world - as opposed to taking off more of the golf club and you've chosen to choose that median line, if I can put it that way, where you're impacting a little on both.

**Mr MEYER** - Yes, that's correct. It was a difficult project to design through here.

**CHAIR** - Looking at the fitness for purpose and value for money, do you have any other comments on this? We're going to have some questions on this later from one of the submitters, so I think maybe if we leave it until they've presented and then we can have the questions to ask back to you as a result of that. I suppose that is a question: why did we receive only this section instead of the whole airport to Sorell bypass in one?

**Mr MEYER** - The whole south east traffic solution?

**CHAIR** - Just from the airport roundabout - I appreciate the roundabout itself, we've already dealt with that - given the fact that we're talking about three major components, we haven't seen the Midway Point component, that didn't come to us. Is it because it was too low in price, do we know what the value of the Midway Point component was because they've been there for a heck of a long time, they've been doing a lot of work.

**Mr MEYER** - Sure. When we looked at the criteria for the parliamentary standing committee, our assessment at the time was that the value didn't meet the criteria for submissions...

**CHAIR** - It was under \$15 million.

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**Mr MEYER** - Yes. Our assessment time was that it was under \$15 million of state funding.

**CHAIR** - Okay, fair enough. If you get to look at these things as a whole, obviously it is better for us to be able to assess things, rather than doing it in pieces I suppose is the observation I make.

**Mr MEYER** - I guess we received the funding for the Hobart Airport back in 2016, so, that has been developed. And we only received the funding for the causeways last year. So, ideally you would look at the whole thing together. I agree.

**CHAIR** - I read your fitness for purpose and value for money, again it is about the cost benefit. The cost benefit is something that the Government has chosen to accept and it is a policy, a decision of Government. It would be interesting to be able to see the whole stretch in one go.

Project costs on the following page, you have got a P50 and a P90 there, the only difference is in the contingency. Do you want to explain that a little more? Someone suggested that it is also to do with interest rates and those sorts of things. Do you have a question on that?

**Ms BUTLER** - I was interested in why there was such a difference in the contingency cost with 2.7 and 4.1? It is a big difference.

**CHAIR** - It is just the nature of P50 and P90 but you might like to explain that.

**Mr MEYER** - Sure. So, essentially the base cost estimate is the estimate cost of what the construction tender will be. The contingency is I guess what you might pay in variations. So, variations can come from a range of factors. It can be scope changes from the proponent to the Government or it can in more of these circumstances be because of unanticipated ground conditions and that is often the case between the P50 and P90. So, while we have done geotech assessments, as is often the case there are unanticipated factors that you're not aware of until you start construction. There is a risk assessment done and there is a price put against each particular risk, which is the difference between the P50 and the P90. If everything that potentially could happen did happen, you would eventually pay up to the \$28.7 million for the project. So, I guess that is what you have to expect the total project outcome may cost. We generally do not reach that. We are generally more around the P50 cost estimate.

**CHAIR** - And that is 90 percent of the estimates come up to scratch, is that how it works?

**Mr MEYER** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - P50 is 50 percent.

**Mr MITCHELL** - The P50 is in 50 percent of the time, you will pay that amount. P90 is that we are 90 percent sure that we will pay under \$28.7 million for this project.

**CHAIR** - Hence the contingency is higher to cover that.

**Mr MITCHELL** - Yes, to give us some certainty.

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**Ms BUTLER** - Can I ask a question around table 3.2? I am married to an accountant, specifically because I am not great with numbers at the best of times. Does that add up the total on FY23?

**CHAIR** - No, it is 0.9 out.

**Ms BUTLER** - Okay. I thought that was just me. Oh good. I added it up a few times.

**CHAIR** - Someone's hit the wrong key, a 9 instead of a 0. It is \$14 million, it's not \$14.9 million.

The Australian Government contribution is there for the five years. So, in the first instance you would have been spending that money on design works?

**Mr MEYER** - That's correct.

**CHAIR** - Quite clearly, this committee has a purpose and it is to make sure that processes and procedures have been followed for the most part, and effective consultation with members of the public and all of those sorts of things. When you see graders, loaders and dozers doing their work and we haven't signed off on it, we get a little bit concerned.

**Mr MEYER** - Sure.

**CHAIR** - But this particular project, there hasn't been a shovel in the ground at this point?

**Mr MEYER** - That's right.

**CHAIR** - Apart from perhaps the digging of holes in the land to the left, near the airport.

**Mr MEYER** - Apart from some investigation work, yes.

**CHAIR** - Is that what it is?

**Mr MEYER** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - For stability and the like?

**Mr MEYER** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Moving on, does anybody have questions on chapter 4? We've covered a lot of it. I think I asked this and I don't know that I got the answer; but I think it was that in general, it may not be suitable for cycling. You don't have any numbers on the cyclists who actually use this stretch?

**Mr MEYER** - We don't, no.

**CHAIR** - Even through the cycle clubs and the like?

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**Mr MITCHELL** - I've seen some figures. The figure for crossing the causeways was in the order of, I think, five to 20 cyclists a day; I may have seen some figures from Clarence Council. If you need to know, we can take that question on notice and find a number for you.

**CHAIR** - I don't think anyone is arguing that cyclists shouldn't be catered for. It was about the cost of putting it in and how many people we're talking about. It is a bit like 'build it and they will come', with regard to the cycleways.

**Mr MITCHELL** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Anyone who has any observation on the eastern causeway will know that that cycleway is used a lot by pedestrians and cyclists. It will be interesting to see how extending it goes, and - if this project passes - what the likely traffic would be on it. It's a fair way to Hobart - as to whether there would be any commuting involved in it or not is another thing. You might have people travelling through to the Cambridge industrial estate and those sorts of things.

**Mr MITCHELL** - Yes, that's what I've been thinking. It's more for people working in Cambridge or the airport who might live in Sorell who might take up that option, if it was a friendlier facility.

**CHAIR** - Ride to work. A good use of public funds. 4.2: I know we will get some other questions on this, but it talks about two direct jobs per \$1 million spent. Are we talking permanent jobs?

**Mr MEYER** - No, that's construction jobs, I think.

**CHAIR** - That's in construction. So it's only a limited period?

**Mr MEYER** - That's right.

**CHAIR** - Temporary.

**Mr MEYER** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - This project has over 130 jobs, on that analysis.

**Mr MEYER** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Finance and procurement: who designed this, out of interest?

**Mr MEYER** - Pitt and Sherry.

**CHAIR** - Of course, they have nothing to do with the construction.

**Mr MEYER** - No, they don't.

**Ms BUTLER** - Was it Hazell Brothers that has been doing the Hobart airport area?

**Mr MEYER** - They have, yes.

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**Ms BUTLER** - Are you allowed to provide information on that at this time, about the tendering process or around who might win the contract to build this section?

**Mr MEYER** - Who might win?

**Ms BUTLER** - Yes.

**Mr MEYER** - Whoever puts in the nicest price and the best submission.

**Ms BUTLER** - It would seem a matter of course, I suppose, that if you've already got an organisation that's doing work up the road that that would be a moving -

**Mr MEYER** - That does happen, yes. You have Fulton Hogan at Midway Point, and Hazell Brothers at the Sorell bypass and Hobart airport. I'm sure they would both be interested in this project.

**CHAIR** - I guess it's also important to understand that it's not always the lowest price that wins it, surely?

**Mr MEYER** - No, it's only one factor we look at.

**CHAIR** - I would hope not. The reason I asked who designed it, is that if they are doing the design and then they are doing the construction, there is a bit of a conflict.

Project timeline; there is a two-year gap here. You did environmental investigations in 2019, the concept was confirmed in 2019, and EPBC approval November 2021. Is that going to happen by November?

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

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

**CHAIR** - And the planning permit?

**Mr MEYER** - We have received the planning permit.

**CHAIR** - And what is the status of that?

**Mr MEYER** - We have a planning permit.

**CHAIR** - Is that being challenged?

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

**CHAIR** - And what is the status at this point?



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

**CHAIR** - No mediation?

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

**CHAIR** - You can't talk about what happened there. I understand mediation processes. When will that will be heard?

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

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

**CHAIR** - 20 December, from Resource Management Planning and Appeals Tribunal.

It is not a major project. It is just being considered under the RMP Appeal, not by the Commission.

**Mr MEYER** - No.

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

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

**Mr TUCKER** - Are you expecting any submissions against it?

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

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

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

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

**Mr TUCKER** - Does this have to go through the Forest Practices Process as well?

**Mr MEYER** - For the Tasmanian Golf Club, we are doing a Forest Practices Plan, for the removal of a number of trees.

**CHAIR** - How many trees are being cut down there?

**Mr MEYER** - On the Tasmanian Golf Club? I wrote that down, actually. Thought you might ask that question.

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Twenty-six.

**CHAIR** - And Milford?

**Mr MEYER** - There are 20 for the remaining project. I don't know how many are on Milford. I think it is a lot less than that.

Twenty-six on the Golf Course. Forty-six overall, and through the whole site, including Milford I guess it's another -

**Mr TUCKER** - The FPA has been approved?

**Mr MEYER** - No; we weren't not sure if we needed to do that. We are preparing that submission now.

**CHAIR** - Land acquisition, excluding Commonwealth land - completed by when in 2020?

**Mr MEYER** - I'm not sure exactly, but the acquisition process has been completed for some time now.

**CHAIR** - It's all been completed?

**Mr MEYER** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - That's excluding Commonwealth land. What about Commonwealth land?

**Mr MEYER** - We are engaging with IAP and the Commonwealth in terms of how we would purchase that land. The Tasmanian Government can't acquire Commonwealth land. It needs to be through the Commonwealth act. So we're looking at having a sub-lease arrangement with the Commonwealth for that portion of land while we purchase that land.

**CHAIR** - Is the Milford acquisition concluded?

**Mr MEYER** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Is that adversarial?

**Mr MEYER** - No, there is still that conversation process to go through.

**CHAIR** - When you say it's complete -

**Mr MEYER** - The Crown owns that portion of land on Milford and the Tasmania Golf Club.

**CHAIR** - Even though you have more consultation to go. You said there was still some work to be done on the Milford acquisition. I wasn't sure whether you were saying -

## PUBLIC

**Mr MEYER** - You go through a compulsory acquisition process, and then there's a compensation process.

**CHAIR** - It's compensation that's outstanding.

**Mr MEYER** - Yes, which happens after the event.

**CHAIR** - Your grant with the golf club, calling for the tenders, with construction commencing in May next year?

**Mr MITCHELL** - From that table, they should be calling for tenders in February 2022.

**Ms BUTLER** - Do you think you'll be on schedule, with how it's progressing to date?

**Mr MEYER** - Yes. We already have the planning permit. We're still going through the RMPAT appeal. Things may change, but our assessment is that there's limited grounds for that permit to be overruled. The only outstanding approvals would be this process, and the EPBC. We think we'll be in a position by February to advertise the tenders.

**Ms BUTLER** - Is it just the small orchids? Is there also wedge-tailed eagle or masked-owl habitat?

**CHAIR** - You might wish to address that, but I believe there are three threatened species plus a eucalypt that's possibly one of its own type.

**Mr TUCKER** - No, you're talking about the limulus, the dry coastal forest. We talked about that before.

**CHAIR** - You mean the viminalis? I thought there was one, in one of the submissions. It will come up when we talk about those. There was a possible eucalypt species that hasn't been found anywhere else, but I might be wrong. I'll let you answer that question.

**Ms BUTLER** - Are there any wedge-tailed eagles and masked-owls in the area? Would these works directly impact those threatened species?

**Mr MEYER** - For the 46 trees that will be removed, every tree was assessed for habitat and for hollows and nesting. There were no significant hollows or nesting sites in those 46 trees.

As part of our assessment, there were no wedge-tailed eagle nests within the vicinity of the roadworks. Birds fly, and there may well be wedge-tailed eagles or masked-owls in that area, but our ecological assessment was that there were no direct impacts from the roadworks on them.

**Ms BUTLER** - I believe there's certain restrictions on being able to conduct work around a nest?

**Mr MEYER** - That's correct. There is no nest within 500 metres of the site, so there's no restrictions for work.

## PUBLIC

**CHAIR** - Materials and Maintenance: you talk about hard rock quarry at Flagstaff Gully. Do you know Rocky Tom at all? Is it in that area? It's a climbing gully. It doesn't incorporate that? That's from an established quarry, presumably?

**Mr MEYER** - Again, it's up to the contractors where they receive their materials from. There are quite a few quarries in the greater Hobart area.

**CHAIR** - It says, 'Concrete and crushed rock products will be supplied from southern Tasmania' - to answer your question - 'with a hard rock quarry at Flagstaff Gully being located approximately 14 kilometres from the site'. That's obviously bluestone. It's not Rocky Tom sandstone. Anyway, I've answered my own question. You're not recommending the use of recycled glass or rubber?

**Mr MEYER** - We're not, no.

**CHAIR** - Do you ever do that these days?

**Mr MEYER** - We don't normally recommend it, no.

**CHAIR** - In your contracts?

**Mr MEYER** - Not that I'm aware of.

**CHAIR** - It might be something you could think about. You say -

A two-coat sprayed seal is proposed for the pavement and this has a typical life of approximately seven years before resurfacing is required.

I think you've mentioned that here before, as have other members, and all I say on that is if you're lucky, from what we've learned of late, with restripping of seal from works that may only be a few months old. We dealt with this one up north. You might want to address what you're doing in your contracts to reduce that possibility, because quite clearly, the contractors don't seem to understand the vagaries of Tasmanian weather. They lay bitumen that's too cold and it doesn't take up the aggregate properly, and all of those sorts of things.

Are you well aware of that? Can you give us a bit of comfort with how the contracts are being written to avoid that?

**Mr MEYER** - In the contracts, the contractor specifies the seal design. There are a number of specifications on temperature control, and when they can and cannot lay the seal. We have a two-year defect liability period on these types of roads, and they're responsible for ensuring they're at the suitable quality at the end of that two-year defect period. They're having instances, I'm aware, where it hasn't lasted as long as we might expect.

**CHAIR** - Do you do any quality control as they're doing it?

**Mr MEYER** - Yes, they have inspection test records, ITPs. We have a quality verifier who assesses things independent to the contractor. Then the superintendent assesses all those test certificates, documentation and records to make sure it complies with the contract.

## PUBLIC

**CHAIR** - You talk about a two-coat sprayed seal. Are you talking about two different sized aggregates?

**Mr MEYER** - I don't know exactly, but yes, often you have like a 14 size aggregate and then a seven on top.

**Mr ELLIS** - Do we have any data around quality assurance? For example, do we know whether we're seeing a higher rate of road failure and remediation work being required at the moment?

**Mr MEYER** - No, I couldn't tell you if it's different to what it has been 10 years ago. I'm not sure.

**Mr ELLIS** - Do we compile that data at all now?

**Mr MEYER** - I'm sure it is by our asset team, yes. They have their asset management database, and that's how they work out their maintenance regimes, whether they will do new seals and those sorts of things.

**Mr ELLIS** - And where there's a failure of a road base, particularly a bad failure, is a review of some kind done into it, looking at what the contractor did, what they could do better?

**Mr MEYER** - Yes. We normally get an independent company in to review the records and do assessments to work out whose fault it may or may not be, and the rectification required.

**Mr ELLIS** - Have we learnt anything over the last few years with some of these larger failures and rectifications? Is there a consistent theme or themes that emerge from the work done by the contractors?

**Mr MEYER** - Not that I'm aware of. It's a bit outside my technical skills.

**CHAIR** - Road width between barriers is of a particular interest to Mr Tucker. In agricultural areas, where they have larger machines, given that this is the main corridor leading to a lot of areas that will be getting irrigation for the first time, or have done in recent years, quite often you see large machinery being transported. What's the width from that centre barrier to -

**Mr TUCKER** - It's going to be dual-lane, isn't it?

**Mr MEYER** - Yes. You'll have no problems with that. I think the lanes are three-and-a-half wide and the median's two.

**CHAIR** - It might be a problem for the causeways until they get built.

**Mr MEYER** - It would be at least 10 metres, I think.

**CHAIR** - Five metres a lane?

**Mr MEYER** - Three-and-a-half lanes, a 2 m shoulder and then the median, which is variable, a minimum of one to two.

## PUBLIC

**CHAIR** - Even if you had a vehicle that is quite large, how wide did you say those vehicles are?

**Mr MEYER** - You could carry a house.

**Mr TUCKER** - Three-point-five.

**CHAIR** - So, there's plenty of space to get around them, if they broke down in the middle of the road. Okay, of course, it's four lanes. Any more questions on that particular page?

Over to risk and sustainability. I am assuming with the golf course that the government is paying for the works at the golf club, or is it shared?

**Mr MEYER** - No, the government's paying.

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

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

**CHAIR** - You have 'ITS requirements at Pittwater intersection'. What is ITS?

**Mr MEYER** - That's the bluetooth devices. All the traffic signals in Hobart now are linked to the internet and NBN. Some of them have connected fibre. These ones will be connected through, and they also have the bluetooth devices so you can monitor the number and speed of vehicles so that back in the traffic control centre, they can visually look at them through the cameras, they know how fast they're going and they can record any accidents and manage the whole network accordingly, change the signals if they need to, those sorts of things.

**CHAIR** - That's purely non-identified data? There's no personal information collected as cars go by with their mobile phones beeping out bluetooth?

**Mr MEYER** - That's right. The way the bluetooth system works is that it's a unique number that changes constantly, is my understanding.

**CHAIR** - Constantly?

**Mr MEYER** - I'm not sure. It's a unique number that's not linked to the phone number, so it's unidentifiable.

**Ms BUTLER** - Would there be lighting around that traffic light system?

**Mr MEYER** - There will be lighting around the traffic signals, yes, not the whole length of the road but around the signals.

**Ms BUTLER** - What would that look like, that lighting? Would it be a singular pole or would it be on different corners?

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**Mr MEYER** - No, it would be numerous poles.

**Ms BUTLER** - A broad question about the design that's been put in front of us today, we have, as a Public Works Committee, signed off on designs before and then they've been completely changed. We can only give a yes or no based on the information given now. Do you think there could be potential for this design to be altered once a contractor is put in place?

**Mr MEYER** - No. Because this project has had quite a long time in the planning period, we actually have the final design. Quite often, when you go through a development application process, you might only have a preliminary design. This is final. It won't change, unless it changes as a result of the EPBC or the RMPAT process, which would be minor bits and pieces, if anything.

**CHAIR** - The lighting at that intersection, the Pittwater Rd intersection, will that be LED? Has there been any configuration suggested so there's limited light spill, so it doesn't affect wildlife and the like?

**Mr MEYER** - There's a lighting design. I don't have it on hand but for that intersection you would be having a lot of lighting to ensure it's safe and visible for traffic flowing through.

**CHAIR** - You know what I'm saying? Mercury vapour lights can be really bright. LEDs are straight down and usually cover a discrete area and get less light spill, and that interrupts wildlife less if it's that type. I'm wondering whether you stipulate in special areas like this, given Milford and its special nature?

**Mr MEYER** - We do stipulate in certain areas but, in terms of an intersection, the point of lights is to make it safe and visible, so I don't know but I think that's unlikely.

**CHAIR** - Okay. Major disbenefits, including likely impacts to the community environment.

**Mr TUCKER** - This is quite interesting. You've got a loss of approximately one hectare and you're talking mainly white gums. You're talking about replacement - planting of one hectare of trees. Whereabouts are you talking about replacing the hectare of trees, replanting them?

**Mr MEYER** - We have an agreement with the Milford property owner for an offset to revegetate a portion of land that's on the edge of the current forest area, which is currently grazing land.

**Mr TUCKER** - That's one for one. Normally, I've always been taught it's one for five - you have to give five back for one.

**Mr MEYER** - That's only if it's a dedicated EPBC offset requirement. There's no requirement for an offset. We've been good citizens and we're replanting trees to try to assist the Milford property.

**Mr TUCKER** - You've got me a little bit lost there because you're still going through the EPBC referral.

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**Mr MEYER** - That's for the orchids. There's no requirement in terms of vegetation communities, trees, *viminialis* or anything else within this precinct

**Mr TUCKER** - All right. You've got me a bit lost because you're saying you're still going through the Forest Practices Association.

**Mr MEYER** - Yes.

**Mr TUCKER** - You haven't got that approval yet?

**Mr MEYER** - No.

**Mr TUCKER** - That's very interesting.

**CHAIR** - There will be one other question that comes up after with regard to *Eucalyptus viminialis*, I think. Anyway, we will wait until that happens.

Over the page: sustainability strategies that will be adopted. It talks about a design to 80 km/h standard rather than 100, noting the existing limit on this section of the highway is 80. You said before about the lights, I suppose, so, obviously, that tends to rule out the 100 km/h. That reduces earthwork volumes, hence, reduces the carbon footprint during construction:

The 80 km/h design also allows most of the existing highway pavement to be retained whereas a 100 km/h design would have required all new pavement.

Can you explain why that is the case?

**Mr MEYER** - Because we're following the existing alignment, the pavement is the material under the seal. If it was a greenfield site like the Sorell bypass, you have to put all the pavement material down because we're widening on both sides. You only have to put new pavement down where there's no existing road.

**CHAIR** - What you're saying is because it's a wider pavement for 100 km/h, you would still be reusing some of the 80 km/h pavement, wouldn't you?

**Mr MEYER** - It would be less because the alignment would have changed because of the speed requirements.

**CHAIR** - Because you're changing the angle of the corners and the like?

**Mr MEYER** - Yes, that's right.

**CHAIR** - Okay. The cycleway: a separate cycleway to be constructed through over the length of the project. Ultimately, a separated cycleway will be available over the full 6 km of the length of the highway between the airport and Sorell. That's nine, isn't it, between the airport and the intersection with Nugent Rd? Are you going to take the cycleway right up to that?

**Mr MEYER** - No, it only goes to Sorell.



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**CHAIR** - It only goes to Sorell. It doesn't go past towards southern beaches?

**Mr MEYER** - No.

**CHAIR** - Any further questions on 6.3? Stakeholder engagement? We have covered a bit of this.

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

So, I think I can get what the attitude is for Milford because they have put in a very significant 18-page submission to us. They might not be entirely happy. Can you indicate where you believe consultation is at with respect to each one of those stakeholders? Barilla for instance, what is your understanding as to their acceptance or otherwise of the project?

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

**CHAIR** - Is that the case for Hobart International Airport as well?

**Mr MEYER** - We have continued our discussions over the last two years with all four landholders. It is my understanding that Hobart International Airport did not have any major concerns.

**CHAIR** - And Milford quite clearly have still got issues, concerns?

**Mr MEYER** - The Milford property owner, while we have agreeance on a number of items, still has concerns for other items.

**CHAIR** - Okay. And the golf club?

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

**CHAIR** - How many landholders are worried about compensation?

**Mr MEYER** - Every landholder who gets an acquisition is worried about compensation I would have thought.

**CHAIR** - Sorry, I mean that might have concerns that they might not get enough. I mean is the reconstruction that you are doing considered enough for the golf club? As long as you do this, are they happy to let that go or is the Government purchasing that land? What is the score?

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

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

**Mr MEYER** - That's correct.

**CHAIR** - Okay. Record of stakeholder consultation. We have been through a fair bit of that I think. Anyone got any questions on that page?

Directly-affected landowners and property acquisition. We have dealt with that and we will hear from them, so, there is not much point in taking up more time now except possibly the left in, left out component. So, the airport concern, we have heard about them wanting to get access to the eastern end of Milford and you have come up with a solution that provides access off Pittwater Rd. Is that access agreed by both the airport and Milford?

**Mr MEYER** - No. As I said before, I haven't had any discussions with the airport about access to Milford property.

**CHAIR** - Sorry, I missed that.

**Mr MEYER** - That's all right. I wasn't aware that that was a particular requirement from Hobart Airport.

**CHAIR** - Okay. They'll get a chance to address that and you'll hear that and we might have you back. Compliance. We know that EPBC approval is required. No noise issues in particular that are identified?

**Mr MEYER** - No, there are no major properties nearby or houses.

**CHAIR** - Environment, flora and fauna. We understand about some of that with regard to the replantings and with regard to the orchids for sure. Aboriginal heritage, can you just tell us about that?. There's an Aboriginal heritage assessment report that was prepared in October 2018. Previous investigations had identified a site on airport land, west of Pittwater Road, that would be impacted by the new works. The October 2018 investigation could not locate this site. Can you tell us the nature of that? Was it an artefact? Was it middens?

**Mr MITCHELL** - It was a single artefact. It was described in the Aboriginal heritage report as Aboriginal heritage item number 5544. It was a single chert flake -

**CHAIR** - A scraper?

**Mr MITCHELL** - Chert flake. I'm not sure quite what chert is. I imagine it's a mineral.

**CHAIR** - It's a very fine rock, I think.

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**Mr MITCHELL** - And it was discovered on a vehicle track and when the two Aboriginal heritage assessors went back in October 2018 to try to locate it they could not find it. So, the instruction on how to manage that going forward is for the contractor to have an unanticipated discovery plan and if they do find that heritage item, that plan will describe how to deal with it.

**Mr ELLIS** - What would typically happen in this situation, let's say this specific piece of chert is found?

**Mr MITCHELL** - My understanding is that an Aboriginal heritage unanticipated discovery plan usually wants the artefact to be moved away from the construction zone, but generally left in the area. So, if they did find it, the impression I get is that the contractor would be instructed to remove it outside of the construction zone but typically keep it on the Pittwater or the airport land in the vicinity. So, it's not a plan to remove it and take it to a museum, they generally want these artefacts left in situ on the land where it is somewhere at the moment, I guess.

**Mr ELLIS** - Do we have a sense of what's happened with this? Has it been stolen, buried, poor record-keeping? How is it that we just lose an artefact?

**Mr MITCHELL** - I don't know. I imagine, given that it's a single flake of rock, that it might have just been dislodged by a vehicle along the track; it might have been dislodged by wildlife; it might have been covered up by natural processes of vegetation growth or sinking into the mud or the dirt.

**CHAIR** - Hard to know.

**Mr MITCHELL** - It's hard to know and I don't have a record of when this numbered artefact was actually first recorded. It probably is in a database somewhere, when it was observed in the first place.

**Mr ELLIS** - It is an interesting unintended consequence of leaving things in situ, isn't it? And that policy that potentially this artefact is now lost to -

**CHAIR** - Posterity. Okay. Planning approvals, we've dealt with; and then follows the project plan and the consultation -whether the members have anything that hasn't covered to date?

I had a lot of notes on it but I think a lot of them have been dealt with.

**Ms BUTLER** - For the record, it is important that it is noted here, that under public transport, the community was strong in their views that improved public transport frequency and affordability was a priority now, and this would alleviate congestion immediately. That certainly needs to be noted. It is very important that we keep pushing for that improvement to public transport for that area. It has been a problem for a long time. Taking cars off the road.

**CHAIR** - Anything else? You can't tell us on what are the grounds for the appeal?

**Mr MEYER** - There's numerous grounds from numerous parties to do with impacts to their properties.

# **PUBLIC**

**CHAIR** - We will hear it from them.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**

**The committee suspended from 3.32 p.m. to 3.42 p.m.**

## PUBLIC

**MR MATT COCKER**, COO, HOBART AIRPORT, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**Mr COCKER** - I would like to clarify my position. I am the Chief Operating Officer at Hobart Airport, COO, not the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

**CHAIR** - We have your submission before us and I will give you the opportunity to make an opening statement.

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

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

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

**CHAIR** - Sorry, Ms Lewis; for your information Mr Cocker was covering off on a number of aspects of the submission in respect to the need to access Milford. Please continue, Mr Cocker.

**Mr COCKER** - I've concluded.

**CHAIR** - Thank you for your submission. Section two says, 'the committee should note that in the event of an aviation emergency affecting Milford, the Aviation Rescue Firefighting Service acquires unimpeded road access to that property.'

There was mention made of the median barriers and the like. Do you have any outstanding concerns about that intersection where the lights are, about getting your firefighting equipment or whatever it might be onto that site into Pittwater Road?

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

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

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**CHAIR** - Travelling east.

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

**CHAIR** - Would that be near the double gates?

**Mr COCKER** - Yes, down towards the pines.

**CHAIR** - You have a double gate that's possibly 300 metres from the entrance to Pittwater Road. Is that the entrance you're talking about?

**Mr COCKER** - No, this is further down towards the pines. On our side of Pittwater Road, there are two emergency access gates, which are frangible gates -

**CHAIR** - What does that mean?

**Mr COCKER** - The fire tenders can actually smash through them and get ready access to portions of the airfield, and move out of the airfield onto Pittwater Road. They are called 'crash gates'. They were aligned to some potential entry points onto Milford. Going back to the point of losing an access point off the Tasman Highway, we are simply suggesting that it could be replicated closer towards the intersection of Tasman and Pittwater, opposite our frangible gate, gate 8.

**CHAIR** - Gate 8, which is further down.

**Mr COCKER** - It's closer towards the Tasman/Pittwater Road intersection.

**CHAIR** - Have you had discussions with Milford on that score?

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

I won't speak on behalf of Milford, but I am aware other services may suggest that such access would be beneficial.

**CHAIR** - What sort of event would it take for you to need access?

**Mr COCKER** - It could be a vegetation fire. It could certainly be an aviation incident, such as a crash on the airport. In fact, we train regularly with the aviation rescue and firefighting service, not only on airport incidents, but also off-airport incidents. Not a lot of

## PUBLIC

incidents have happened off-airport in Hobart, and that's a very good thing. Historically, there has been at least one that I'm aware of, decades ago.

**CHAIR** - I actually remember it. I was about five at the time, so that shows how far back it was.

**Mr COCKER** - Certainly, with the airfield being in the position that it's in, with water surrounding the airport, we need to ensure we're able to access not only Milford, but also Five Mile and Seven Mile Beach, Tiger Head Bay.

**Mr TUCKER** - Could we get Mr Cocker to identify where he's talking about, where he wants the access? We've identified where the access is at the moment.

**Mr COCKER** - The attachment to the submission does indicate -

**Mr TUCKER** - Is that where you're talking about, which would put it just here?

**Mr COCKER** - That's right, yes.

**Mr TUCKER** - Right where that intersection is?

**Mr COCKER** - Yes.

**Mr TUCKER** - On the Milford side. Right.

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

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

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

**CHAIR** - Clearly, you would not want to be travelling down to Midway Point and turn around and come back. It could be quite well advanced by the time you got back.

Unless there is anything else that you wish to add, I don't know there is anything more that we can ask, except about the approval process for the acquisition, and having to get the necessary approvals for the Government to interact with you. You are not sure how long that is going to take?

**Mr COCKER** - No. I am not aware of how much further time is needed, but certainly the State Government and Commonwealth Government are talking freely about that acquisition.

## **PUBLIC**

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Mr Cocker. I will reiterate the statement I made at the commencement of your evidence, and advise you that what you have said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table, that privilege does not attach to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you are just repeating what you have said to us here. Do you understand that?

**Mr COCKER** - I do understand that.

**CHAIR** - Thank you for your time.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**



## PUBLIC

**Mr JUSTIN GOC**, GENERAL MANAGER, BARILLA BAY SEAFOODS, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** - Would you like to make an opening statement in relation to your submission?

**Mr GOC** - Thank you. My business has been operating at 1388 Tasman Highway for 40 years. We are quite a diverse business, covering oyster farming, processing, retail and a restaurant, and we employ about 35 people across two sites.

Oyster farming has its challenges. I am not sure whether many would be aware, but in 2016, we lost 98 per cent of our stock, due to, what we called Pacific oyster mortality syndrome or POMS.

**CHAIR** - The virus?

**Mr GOC** - Yes. We are constantly being subjected to sewerage spills in the Pittwater region.

COVID-19 is well versed, and being a tourism business, we obviously suffered accordingly. Now, we agree that the road has to be improved.

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

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

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

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

**CHAIR** - They're not questions we can answer, but the department may.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is not only us that are obviously being affected. The commentary around Milford is well versed but there are plenty of other endemic aquatic species and terrestrial. I have probably got the terminology wrong here, but plants and different things that are all in and around the Pittwater region that are incredibly important.

**CHAIR** - Flora and fauna.

**Mr GOC** - Yes, thank you. And how that storm water impacts with all the development and all that is going on in that area, how that all alternately ends up in our bay, which is the lifeblood of our business.

**CHAIR** - Anyone have questions?

**Ms BUTLER** - Thank you very much for coming in today and providing this information to us. Where are you at with whether you will be compensated at this point in time for that potential loss of business from not having that left turn?

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

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**Ms BUTLER** - You are a significant business there. I am surprised, because there has been so much interaction with the golf course. What about having some consistency there?

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

**Ms BUTLER** - I'm not contradicting you at all, because they did talk in the submission about the loss of business for the golf course. Here, this is a potential significant loss of business for you too. It's interesting that there hasn't been a consistency with that communication.

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

**Mr GOC** - I haven't had any communication.

**Ms BUTLER** - I also wanted to have a quick chat to you about the drainage issues and the impact that you already encounter, from the information you provided to us, around existing infrastructure. In your perspective, would there be additional flooding? Do you think that could occur in that area? Is that area prone to flooding?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Ms BUTLER** - Is there anything else that you think we might need to know as a committee?

**Mr TUCKER** - I hear fully what you're saying about the stormwater management because I'm from up in the Break O'Day region and freshwater is not good for oysters. Things that come with freshwater are not good for oysters. That's a very good question that we need answered about the stormwater management in regard to all the oyster growers in the area. You were saying that you're losing about a third day, if correct from memory, through the year?

**Mr GOC** - It really depends on the weather. In 2017-18 we had dry years. We were not closed very often. I guess the risk profile that we have, for me as a farmer in Pittwater, is we have to risk-mitigate and we have to be able to sell our products safely for human consumption. It's getting to the point that we may have to consider wet storage or depuration which ultimately means we're taking oysters out of the water and we're putting them into a holding facility, not dissimilar to an abalone holding facility, and we flush them. I would never have thought that would have been the case in Tasmania.

**Mr TUCKER** - That's been occurring in the last couple of years. Is that what you're saying?

**Mr GOC** - Every year it's getting worse.

**Mr TUCKER** - Do you have any figures with you in regard to that or to back up what you're saying?

**Mr GOC** - As in the quantum of loss?

**Mr TUCKER** - Yes, over years that it's showing that this is happening.

**Mr GOC** - We can conservatively over the winter months sell anywhere between probably \$20 000 to \$40 000 worth of oysters. In the summer months, if we got a rain and a

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closure for three weeks in December, we could lose anywhere between probably half a million dollars because, ultimately, that's when people want to eat seafood and that's our greatest selling period.

**CHAIR** - With respect to this, is it a function of where you are? Quite clearly, it's in a very low lying area. You say there are five businesses, is that what you're saying?

**Mr GOC** - There are five different oyster farms in that area.

**CHAIR** - You talk about sewage spills. Where's that happening from? Off your own facility?

**Mr GOC** - No, the sewage spills are occurring from the infrastructure that is in and around the region.

**CHAIR** - It's the mains, is it, that's causing it?

**Mr GOC** - It's plants, it's pump stations. It's all of the above.

**CHAIR** - You're saying that by putting in a wider road, it's going to provide opportunity for more water to sheet off.

**Mr GOC** - Correct. I would love to know where that is going to be directed.

**CHAIR** - How do you deal with your own waste in your business? Is that treated in some way and put out into the bay?

**Mr GOC** - We're not on a sewage system where we are. We have our own septic system.

**CHAIR** - For your factory, in your oyster production. Do you do oyster shucking and things on site?

**Mr GOC** - Yes, all of that's dealt with via council regulation.

**CHAIR** - Is that into a septic system?

**Mr GOC** - Essentially, yes.

**CHAIR** - You are not discharging directly into the bay?

**Mr GOC** - No.

**CHAIR** - With regard to the left-hand access, I was thinking about the bike path. It might be a business opportunity. If you promoted yourself to the cycling community it might end up being a significant opportunity. Have you thought about that side of it?

**Mr GOC** - No, I haven't, to be honest. My only point as to the cycling would be that the prevailing wind in the area is a northerly and it will make for some interesting bike rides across the causeways.

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**CHAIR** - I said that earlier, about getting sprayed with saltwater. The left-hand access, it's all the matter that they have gone past you before they can turn.

**Mr GOC** - Correct, yes.

**CHAIR** - You think that, perhaps, there's a case for compensation on the signage. You've talked about that. You're concerned about exemptions for the department not to have to deal with your issues at all. Can you clarify that?

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

**Mr TUCKER** - Around the stormwater management, you were saying, with the development around the areas, have you had this conversation with the council as an oyster growers' group?

**Mr GOC** - Yes, we've been in these conversations for the last decade. Unfortunately, we're probably the small guys.

**Mr TUCKER** - Is this considered with the developments? I would imagine it would be dealt with under the planning scheme, stormwater management, with developments?

**Mr GOC** - I can only reflect on my experience and, unfortunately, we keep getting closed more and more often. In the past, we used to get closed on salinity. If enough rain fell, the water dynamics changed, then we would get salinity tests and we would be precautionarily closed. Now, basically, all I'm waiting for is a text message from the relevant body to tell us that there's been a spill.

**Mr TUCKER** - Those relevant bodies, is that the environmental health officer from council who is doing these?

**Mr GOC** - No.

**Mr TUCKER** - That's coming from within the Government?

**Mr GOC** - Not within the Government, no.

**Mr TUCKER** - Who does the tests, then, to notify you and to notify you by text?

**Mr GOC** - TasWater.

**Mr TUCKER** - TasWater, which is a council-owned organisation, really.

**CHAIR** - Unless there's anything else, we've covered your exemption for the left-hand access, sewerage spills, the bike lane, signage, stormwater; no consultation. Thank you very much for taking the time to come and present to us again. I advised you at the commencement of your evidence, before you go -

**MR GOC** - Sorry.

## **PUBLIC**

**CHAIR** - What you've said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege but once you leave the table you need to be aware that privilege does not attach to any comments that you might make to anyone, including the media, even if you're just repeating what you've said to us. Do you understand that?

**Mr MEYER** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**

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**Mr GEOFF CURRY** WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** - Would you like to make an opening statement?

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

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

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

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

Looking at it, with the golf course, there's 14 golf courses within 25 km of Pittwater. That's an awful lot of golf courses when you consider that there's only one place on earth that these orchids grow, which is a private property across the road. That's the basis that I put a submission in here. I don't believe we're giving full credit to the significance of the orchids.

**CHAIR** - Okay. I'll kick off. You say it needs to go ahead. We appreciate it needs to go ahead. You say no talk of the environment. Well, it is dealt with and quite clearly there are studies and the like that back that up. This is just a single submission that's almost a summary, I guess. Just with respect to the solution that's being put before us, you say it's not the best solution. Do you have any suggested solutions that might achieve the same end that they're wanting to achieve?

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

**CHAIR** - Sorry, you're talking about coming from east to west?



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**Mr CURRY** - Both ways. The road's going to run parallel - each side will run parallel to each other.

**CHAIR** - So, it's just the entrance to Milford you're talking about? Are you talking about the east -

**Mr CURRY** - No, that's the corner. It's called Lewis corner, the bend in the highway.

**CHAIR** - The one on the corner. Yes. I just wanted to clarify what that was.

**Mr CURRY** - That will remain, it's just next to the Milford entrance. I just question is this the best use of government funds trying to squeeze a four-lane highway at 80 kilometres per hour onto a cramped footprint? If you google up golf clubs and golf club membership, which I've done recently - as I said, I dislike the golf versus orchids debate - it would appear that golf club membership worldwide is falling. And it's not a secret, I don't believe, that the Tasman Golf Club's not in a particularly good financial position. If we're going to look back in five years' time, if it folds, that we've spent \$1 million on the golf club, for the golf club to fold, then we've got a poor, second-rate road on a cramped footprint because we didn't take the hard decision today.

**CHAIR** - You're saying that is to expand out towards the golf club to make it a -

**Mr CURRY** - Perhaps, I don't know. I don't have expertise in that area.

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

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

**CHAIR** - Did you say 15 metres?

**Mr CURRY** - It's about 15 metres, don't quote me on that. I can Google it.

**CHAIR** - It could be 20, it could be ten?

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

**CHAIR** - Which orchid is this?

**Mr CURRY** - The Milford Leek-orchid.

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

**Mr CURRY** - Yes, that is correct.

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

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

**CHAIR** - Or some of them.

**Mr CURRY** - Probably all of them. They are quite fragile. On properties similar to Milford, with leek orchids in particular Australia-wide, if you put sheep on them, in two years they'll be gone. For whatever reason, no-one seems to know.

**CHAIR** - Too high in nutrients, probably.

**Mr CURRY** - We don't know.

**CHAIR** - Sheep aren't run there.

**Mr CURRY** - No. That property's been managed for conservation by the Lewis family since the 1800s.

**CHAIR** - I think I read 1826.

**Mr CURRY** - Yes. It's a fairly large tract of remnant *Eucalyptus viminalis* forest. Assessments by qualified people put it down as being in particularly good condition with very small amounts of weeds.

**Mr TUCKER** - Mr Curry, you talked about State Growth's submission not covering the environmental parts. I am interested because they're doing a forest practices plan and an EPBC referral. Where do you think they need to do more?

**Mr CURRY** - In my submission I attached an email from Andrew Crane from DPIPW. His department is qualified to make these decisions and he listed a whole host of things that he thought were deficient and needed to be addressed. The drainage, in State Growth's submission, too, they said there are drains on Milford - there are no drains on Milford in the forest. The culverts come across the road and just empty into the bush.

**CHAIR** - I think their observation was that it would still empty into the bush the way it does today.

**Mr CURRY** - There's just going to be more of it.

**CHAIR** - Because the road is wider? It's not going to extend the drainage lines, necessarily.

**Mr CURRY** - That's their hope.

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**CHAIR** - That's what they're suggesting.

**Mr CURRY** - Yes, they're suggesting it.

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

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

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

As to road works themselves, the vibration and so on, there is no blasting to be done there, I don't believe, so that won't impact the orchids a lot. They grow as a tuber, they're an underground tuber.

**Ms BUTLER** - Could you explain what they actually look like, their height and what a bush looks like?

**Mr CURRY** - We'll deal with the Milford Leek Orchid, it's coming into flower now. It's a tuber underground.

**CHAIR** - How big?

**Mr CURRY** - I have never seen one, Rob, so I honestly don't know.

**CHAIR** - You wouldn't dig it up, obviously.

**Mr CURRY** - No. I would imagine it is not particularly large. I grow native orchids, not the rare ones; the tubers are quite small, like a tiny potato. At this time of year, it will put up a single leaf that looks like a blade of grass, and in the next couple of weeks a flower spike will emerge out the side. The Milford leaf orchid is multiflowered, and the flowers are probably 10 to 12 millimetres high up a stem. A good one will be 600 millimetres tall with 10 or a dozen flowers on it. They will be pollinated by various insects, go to seed and by Christmas they have vanished again. They have distributed the seed and they vanish.

The two spider orchids that grow there, *Caladenia sagicola*, which is the other critically endangered orchid -

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**CHAIR** - Is that the one that is at Dodges Ferry as well?

**Mr CURRY** - It is reported from Dodges Ferry. I have monitored the site at Dodges Ferry since 2016 and it has not appeared since. The site is particularly badly overgrown with weeds and freesias.

**CHAIR** - Sorry, I didn't want to interrupt too much.

**Mr CURRY** - It is highly unlikely it survives at Dodges Ferry. The spider orchid, *sagicola*, is quite a big, white Spider Orchid, very distinctive and very pretty. Again, it grows from a tuber. It will put up a leaf, then push up a flower stem - usually single flowered, occasionally we get double flowers. It is a big, flashy, white spider orchid, that will be pollinated. They have gone to seed now. We monitored those in September; we surveyed for those and recorded the site of all the plants that we found. The flowers that were pollinated are going to seed and they will disperse their seed and they will vanish again.

If you don't look on the right day, for you people here, if you were to go out looking for them you probably wouldn't find them. I spend an awful lot of my time walking around the bush looking at the ground. I am also a photographer, so if you would like photos I am very happy to supply photos of them.

**Ms BUTLER** - For the record, that definition you gave us was fabulous, so thank you very much.

**CHAIR** - Very well described. Quite clearly, you like your plants.

**Mr CURRY** - Yes, I do.

**CHAIR** - I see you have a couple of recommendations here. You say the annual survey for *Prasophyllum milfordense* is scheduled for Saturday 14 November 2020, and a similar survey strategy will be undertaken. Is that still the case?

**Mr CURRY** - It may change by a week either way, depending on the flowering.

**CHAIR** - Who is going to undertake that?

**Mr CURRY** - Threatened Plants Tasmania run it. It is a volunteer group. We provide the volunteers to do the survey. I will personally coordinate the field trip and do the data collection for it. The data is collected and filed with the Natural Values Atlas, the NVA, supplied to the Threatened Species section.

**CHAIR** - And yet, there is a variation between what is in the Natural Values Atlas and what you are picking up?

**Mr CURRY** - No. Because they are critically endangered, in the past - since Threatened Plants Tasmania has been doing the surveys - they put one waypoint into the NVA with a note on it that the complete data set is held by the threatened species section. This is to stop people trespassing on the property to see the orchid, and trespassing on the property, digging them up and stealing them.

## PUBLIC

**CHAIR** - One waypoint could equal 12 plants?

**Mr CURRY** - One waypoint last year equalled 600.

**CHAIR** - I know why you are saying that now.

**Mr CURRY** - There is a note on the NVA that says that the full data sets held by a Threatened Species section.

**CHAIR** - One is locational and one is particular?

**Mr CURRY** - Yes. People like State Growth who are doing a project like this, they have full access to the complete data set.

**CHAIR** - And you are recommending that approval for the project should not be granted until the survey results have been collated and mapped?

**Mr CURRY** - Maintenance of Milford forest by the Lewis family has changed in the last 10 years. It was done with small-scale systematic burning. The forest itself is set up into nine management units, so there is a history of when the units were burnt. As the guy from the airport said, fires at Milford are a real issue. Robyn has taken the initiative to move away from burning to slashing. She had different parts of the property slashed each year. We are still assessing what result we are getting from that.

**CHAIR** - So, you don't know whether cool burning, which is what you're talking about, affects this plant, or how it might affect it, compared to slashing?

**Mr CURRY** - We have got some of the answers. Cool burning increases the silver wattles and bracken fern, both of which choke the property out. Slashing is found to be far superior, particularly with bracken fern. It doesn't come back as harsh after the slashing. Different areas of the property have been slashed and obviously our focus at the moment is towards the highway. We are always hopeful that we will find new outlying populations that we haven't recorded before.

**Mr TUCKER** - With the slashing, do you find that it spreads more weeds? It is something that we have seen up our way because we have got that spanish heath, and I can't say what I want to call it.

**Mr CURRY** - The weed incursions comes in from Pittwater Road and the highway. Some of it is from people pulling up and they are in the wilderness, so they are chucking their garden rubbish and their domestic garbage over the fence, which has put some of the weeds on it. Other ones, we suggest, would be airborne weeds coming off the highway. They are working their way in so, when the slashing is done, you start in the middle of the property and work our way back out to the highway or Pittwater Road, so that any carryover is being brought back, not brought into the property. That is part of the way we are hoping that the slashing will prevent the weeds spreading. It is an ongoing issue.

**CHAIR** - One year's seeding, seven years weeding, they say. They do where I come from.

## **PUBLIC**

Any further questions from members?

Thank you very much, Mr Curry. You have provided quite a lot of information there. Before you go, I just need to mention once again, as at the commencement of your evidence, what you have said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table you need to be aware that privilege does not attach to any comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you are just repeating what you said to us. Do you understand that?

**Mr CURRY** - Yes, I do.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much and thank you for your time.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**

## PUBLIC

**Ms ROBYN LEWIS** WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**Ms LEWIS** - Mr Chairman, I would like to ask that this be a closed session please, is that possible?

**CHAIR** - I don't think we can. We operate under an act and the act says that you need to sit with open doors.

**Ms LEWIS** - Okay. Some of what I had hoped to talk about is the subject of ongoing disputes. So, I won't be able to talk about those aspects.

**CHAIR** - I can appreciate that. Unless you are wanting the department to respond to some of the things that you say.

**Ms LEWIS** - Not at the moment. But we have got an ongoing dispute through the Resource Management Planning and Appeal Tribunal.

**CHAIR** - That is a separate process. We can't influence the planning process.

**Ms LEWIS** - There are some issues I would like to talk to you about that I don't want to reveal.

**CHAIR** - I think if it is incorporated in the planning process, and quite clearly there is an appeal, I believe, on foot, it is certainly not something that we can - I am not quite sure on the technicalities of whether you can share the submission that you put to them, but it would seem that you certainly can't talk about anything that might have been dealt with in mediation either.

**Ms LEWIS** - No. There are some aspects I would like to present to you that are of relevance to that so I can't talk about those.

**CHAIR** - It's a bit of a cleft stick. I am not sure, Mr Secretary, whether you have any advice?

Seeking advice.

**CHAIR** - It is protected by parliamentary privilege but, as I was just hearing in that discussion, you have made a submission to us. If you stick to the submission - we can only deal with the submission.

**Ms LEWIS** - Yes, well, there will be some things I won't be able to elaborate on.

**CHAIR** - If you get a point where you feel that you can't talk about something, or we start talking to you, ask you questions and you say 'No, I can't go there', then we will respect that.

Before you commence your evidence, I would just like to inform you, as you have probably heard three or four times now, some of the important aspects of committee proceedings. It is a hearing. A committee hearing is a proceeding in parliament, receives the

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protection of parliamentary privilege. This is an important legal protection that allows individuals giving evidence to a parliamentary committee, to speak with complete freedom, without the fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place out of parliament. It applies to ensure that parliament receives the very best information in conducting its inquiries. It is important to be aware that this protection is not accorded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside the confines of the parliamentary proceedings.

This is a public hearing and members of the public and journalists may be present. This means your evidence may be reported. Do you understand?

**Ms LEWIS** - Yes, I do.

**CHAIR** - Before I go on -

Introductions made.

**Ms LEWIS** - I have made a lengthy submission. Thank you very much for the opportunity to be able to come and talk to that. I don't know how much of this you want me to go through.

**CHAIR** - We have the submission, suffice to say, so I would suggest that you deal with the things that are your main issues.

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

It has been managed for conservation since 1829, at our own cost. We do not charge government for any of this, so we are looking after the two endemic orchids. There seems to be some confusion. There are two that are endemic to the farm now, because the three specimens of the other one at Dodges Ferry appear to be extinct. They haven't been seen.

**CHAIR** - Sorry, to clarify. I thought there were three orchids.

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

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

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



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It is a unique reference. You know how we have a type specimen of a plant when they first find a new plant? It is almost like a type habitat and it is old-growth forest, some trees three to four hundred years old. So, it's a national treasure

**CHAIR** - They're eucalypts, obviously?

**Ms LEWIS** - Mostly eucalypts but there are very old blackwoods, there are very old bankias and other things.

When I first met State Growth, Shane Gregory, I think it was, said to me, 'It's just bush'. If it was just bush, we wouldn't be sitting here, we wouldn't have gone through two years of agony, basically, to deal with it.

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

That's a mental approach as well. We definitely do not put the environment first. The environment is coming last, and it's very, very clear to me and to most people who see what's going on.

There was some confusion earlier about, 'well, doesn't the EPBC cover this?'. The EPBC Act only covers - by the way, just to reiterate, I've got a Master of Science degree from Oxford University in forest ecology and land management so I'm qualified in my own right. I also have a degree in economics and I've done a lot of big projects before and, I would have to say, this is one of the worst ones I've seen for many years. That's just an aside. With the -

**CHAIR** - Sorry. What have you seen? Can I just -

**Ms LEWIS** - I worked in Africa and Asia. I've worked -

**CHAIR** - No, no, no, no. Sorry, with respect to this project?

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

We got a bit cheesed off about this. I'm on the airport consultation committee so I would ring up Matthew and ask, 'What did they say to you?', and we were all being told different things. We decided to have joint meetings, which were hosted by Hobart Airport, and with the mayor and the engineers of Sorell and Clarence both present and that actually achieved a lot.

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But I think our big mistake was we stopped those meetings because we thought things had been agreed and there have been a lot of things that have gone backwards since then.

**CHAIR** - How long ago are we talking about here?

**Ms LEWIS** - We were doing that in 2019. Probably stopped those in early 2020 when it was agreed that we've got, as various other people have said, a compromise situation sitting in the middle, which is sort of like, as their own consultant described it, the best of the worst, really. We stopped about then and there has been a lot of going backwards since that point. Matt Cocker and I both discussed the other day, he actually offered to start it again but I think it's probably too late. Anyway, that was an aside, really, but it's -

**CHAIR** - No, the reason I asked was when you said it's the worst you've seen, I wasn't sure what you had seen in terms of the project documentation, that's all.

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

**CHAIR** - Can I ask you what they are?

**Ms LEWIS** - There's a farm, a mixed farm, for a start. There's a vineyard.

**CHAIR** - They're sheep and cattle?

**Ms LEWIS** - Sheep. No cattle any more although, with rainfall going up, we might have to have cattle again. But it's sheep mainly.

**Mr TUCKER** - How many sheep do you run?

**Ms LEWIS** - I've got 120. It's a stud but we've moved out of stud, moving into lambs now. It's a small area and it's very, very dry until this year so it's small but it has been quite good. Say, 100-odd lambs more a year, things like that, so fat lambs and stuff now at the moment.

There's a vineyard. It's the second-oldest vineyard in the Coal River Valley, called Milford, and it's the only vineyard, I think, in Tasmania that has medalled consecutively at the Royal Hobart Show since we started entering in 1992. It's an established, high-quality vineyard.

I have a joint venture with the CSIRO for manuka, and we're now looking at expanding that into sandalwood with a view to climate change and things like that.

**CHAIR** - Is that for bees?

**Ms LEWIS** - No, we're looking at the medicinal purposes and distilling. There'll be honey, but that's really an aside. It's the world's first research trial for manuka to look at the yields of the active ingredient in different provenances of the park. That's been going for 10 years.

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I also have a tourism-related business - ecotourism - which I'm working on with people from Sydney, a company called Ecotopia. I have an IT-related business as well.

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

**CHAIR** - You have landscape supplies as well?

**Ms LEWIS** - Yes, I lease some land to them, but that's not my business. I lease that.

**CHAIR** - But that happens on the property?

**Ms LEWIS** - It happens on the property. It's a busy place. There are people coming and going all the time. That's one reason why the access is absolutely critical. But nobody's ever asked. I think, 'she's a woman, just forget about it' - that's very much the attitude that has been extended to me, I'm afraid.

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

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

**CHAIR** - It's obviously going towards what your appeal might be about. We don't have to go there.

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

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

**CHAIR** - The EPBC doesn't deal with fauna?

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

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There's no protection for the habitat and, as you heard from Mr Curry, these orchids grow in a symbiotic relationship with fungi in the soil, which are directly related to the white gums. If the white gums go, they go too. We're talking about the extinction of two species as a possibility. It's a risk, and to my mind it's a risk that is not yet adequately dealt with.

**CHAIR** - The white gum is *viminalis*?

**Ms LEWIS** - *Viminalis* is the white gum, yes. It's old-growth forest. It looks as it would've looked in Aboriginal times. It's interesting to hear there's Aboriginal studies done, saying can we find an artefact, but no-one has gone to speak to the Indigenous community. I know this for a fact because I've spoken to them about how they feel about this.

There are cultural concerns about this as well, and historical concerns. I don't think they've been taken into account at all. It's all very well to find one piece of chert, but to talk to Aboriginal people about how they feel about it - you have to see it to understand, in a way, that it's as it would have looked like in Aboriginal times. There are very, very few examples of this left in Tasmania, particularly so close to Hobart.

**CHAIR** - So, there's been no active reorganisation of plants and things on the site.

**Ms LEWIS** - This part of the forest, with the orchids, has been managed for conservation since 1829, and the earliest records we have of this are from 1841. I have one here. Would you like to see?

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Ms LEWIS** - This painting was done on 13 October 1841, by Louisa Ann Meredith, a very notable Tasmanian botanical artist. I won't pass it around, I'll show it to you. That is the *saggicola* orchid at the top. Now, she hasn't got both of them at the same time because, as Mr Curry said, one flowers earlier, in September-October - so she has some other flowers here as well. Some other orchids are flowering about the same time, a tiger orchid and a couple of others. I brought that along to show that these plants have history. We have some documentation going back.

To my mind, what we're doing here shouldn't just be about money. Tasmania has some important values; some of it is our history, and some is our environment. I would like to put that on the record, that we shouldn't just be talking about dollars and cents.

My late husband was southern Tasmania's leading rural property valuer. He once said to me: Robyn, the value of a project is not just about the money; it's about the actual intrinsic values of things. Yes, you can put a dollar value on a piece of land, but it's actually more than that.

We have to think very hard about the legacy we're leaving for the next 200 years. This family has looked after it for 200 years, and what are we doing now? We're about to make a decision that could, potentially, wipe out these two species and cause this habitat to implode. Is that what we want to leave to our children?

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**CHAIR** - Getting back to what you may or may not want to say here, it's about what you would prefer not to see reported. As long as you understand that, you do have parliamentary privilege. You can talk about it.

**Ms LEWIS** - That's fine. Back to the fauna issue, we were originally promised we would have wildlife underpasses as part of the design, for example. They were taken away on the basis of a statement made by the environmental consultant, when they saw some feral chooks on the property, that Tasmanian devils can't be here because there are feral chooks.

Well, Tasmanian devils can't climb trees. I've had Tasmanian devil experts come out there. We know they're there. They live there. We've found devil scats right at the corner of Pittwater Road - I put a few in the freezer, I didn't bring that in - but they've been proven to be on the site.

Tasmania is known as the roadkill capital of the world, and this is going to be the welcome mat, right at the door of the Hobart Airport, unless we take consideration of that. That's been totally taken off the table, which I think is a mistake. It is something that might be pursued later or might not.

An ecosystem is an integrated thing. It's not just a few plants in your garden; the animal component is important.

Three semi-resident wedge-tailed eagles were nesting on the property, until one of them was killed by a truck on the highway. It was - guess what - going after a feral rooster that had been dumped on the highway. The truck driver was in tears. The remaining eagle took perhaps five years to find a new partner. They don't nest there anymore. We haven't found a nest. They nest up at Mount Rumney now, but they are always on the property - it's a hunting ground for eagles and part of their range, as it were. There are quolls, there are white-bellied sea eagles and there are masked owls, and yes, the trees along the strip are surveyed but nobody's really looked at what's happening inside. As Geoff Curry pointed out earlier, what is done along the strip near the highway is going to have impacts inside. It's going to open up the canopy. So, there's a wind effect as well, which dries everything out but it will also open up the canopy and back to the orchids, they need about a 50 per cent canopy cover for proper flowering. Once it gets a bit more closed than that they don't do so well, and once it's more open they don't seem to do so well either.

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

**CHAIR** - What do you see as the solution?

**Ms LEWIS** - What do I see as the solution? I think -

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**CHAIR** - Given that there's a highway there at the moment -

**Ms LEWIS** - The highway is there at the moment. Well if we're going to talk about what I've written about in the rest of my submission, I don't think this process has been handled particularly well and I think it has been cut off at the knees right at the beginning by the council passing a motion saying that it couldn't impact on the golf club and it's probably precluded the examination alternatives and I'd like to look at that.

One of the problems with what was described as Lewis Corner, which is actually the bend in the road where my driveway comes off, is that it's highly accident-prone previously. It used to be 100 kilometres per hour, there was at least one fatality a year and probably one serious accident a month. It was either the golf club caretaker or us being woken up in the middle of the night by people covered in blood, knocking on the door. This was pre-mobile phones of course, because the only lights they could see, you know, where to come. So, we campaigned to have that speed limit reduced to 80 kilometres per hour and we were told we couldn't do it because it didn't meet the right formula and I said to them, "Well, next time it's a fatality, it's on your head." And there was one a month later when a mother of an eight-year-old child was killed and then the speed limit was reduced and to my knowledge, there hasn't been a fatality on that stretch of road since but only last week there was very close to one. Cars come from the Sorell direction, they're perhaps doing a little bit more than 80 kilometres per hour - and I'm concerned that when there are two lanes, people will be driving at 80 kilometres per hour - and lost control, narrowly missed a tree of a diameter about that much and ended up doing a 180 and 20 metres into the bush. He was very, very lucky he wasn't killed, this man.

It's still a dangerous corner and to my view looking at removing that curvature would have been a good option and looking at making it 100 kilometres per hour, straightening it out, and that would unfortunately have necessitated more works in the golf club. I think it should be remembered that just prior to this project, the golf club had actually put forward a proposal that they were going to reduce to nine holes and go into partnership with the golf course that's being built currently down the end of Seven Mile Beach, so have a joint operation. They are a championship links - that was part of the farm, they are my neighbours, I get on very well with them - but this option was never seriously looked at and you're looking at investing public money and I believe you've got to maybe reopen some of those questions. I don't know whether you can or not.

**CHAIR** - It's government policy, so it's a bit difficult. We need to look at the process they've gone through and a consultation's been raised and that's something that we can comment on. You were talking about 100 kilometres per hour, straighter road. Wouldn't that provide more aerial movement, if I could put it that way -

**Ms LEWIS** - Well, it would have moved - had we been able to -

**CHAIR** - of pollutants and things onto the property?

**Ms LEWIS** - No, because it would have been further away from Milford. The bend is towards Milford so if you cut the corner off it would actually be a huge benefit and protect the orchids probably 90 per cent. I don't believe that the process of developing and consulting on this project has been particularly good. As I said, from the taxpayer's point of view, it needs to

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be examined properly, fairly and transparently. You, as a committee, I believe, need to be seeking more information.

I did, as you probably know, address your five questions, thank you for that. I looked at those and I also looked at the legislation and the stated purpose and the necessity and advisability of carrying this project out and generally that the committee should in all cases take such measures and procure such information to enable you to answer those questions. I went through the questions one by one but I believe that this project fails to demonstrate strategy. I believe it fails to use regulatory instruments for the public purpose for which they are intended. I believe that it uses analytical tools to exclude members of the public from quantitative input. I think there has been a certain amount of misrepresentation, perhaps not overtly but there have been things left out that perhaps shouldn't have been left out.

I do not believe, as it currently stands, it complies with some aspects of the Environment Protection Biodiversity Act, EPBC Act. I also believe it ignores some safety related and quality of life issues, particularly for local residents, they don't seem to matter.

**CHAIR** - In what sense?

**Ms LEWIS** - I am a local resident, and Justin Goc -

**CHAIR** - Quality of life, I am wondering what you mean by that.

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

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

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

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

**CHAIR** - How often do you have B doubles visit?

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

**CHAIR** - What would be your most common size truck?

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

**CHAIR** - If you cannot use the access -

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

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

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

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

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

**CHAIR** - Have you spoken with Matt on that?

**Ms LEWIS** - Yes, he is aware of it.

**CHAIR** - Are you're in agreement with that?

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

**Mr ELLIS** - What percentage of your land is being acquired?

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



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and narrow. The overall area is insignificant, but it's the configuration of it and it is the management of the impact during the works that is a particular concern to me.

I believe it ignores the commercial and economic impacts which I just described, and definitely understates the environmental impacts on the local geographic area, including Mr Goc's businesses.

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

**CHAIR** - We are not professionals, we are assessing it for a process and the like. We are not economists who can get advice.

**Ms LEWIS** - The reason why the habitat has not been properly assessed under the local act - the State act, is because there is a loophole in the Clarence Interim Planning Scheme.

**CHAIR** - What is that?

**Ms LEWIS** - Probably about the year 2000, there were overlays done to put in what is called the LIST. Some of you would have seen the LIST.

**CHAIR** - We know what the LIST is.

**Ms LEWIS** - For example, the orchid population, all the threatened species get put in through the Natural Values Atlas. They get uploaded every six weeks; or it used to be six weeks, it's probably once every six months now that gets put into the LIST.

If you are doing it now, there would be software to create an overlay out of the data points. But, back in the day it was done manually. For some reason the biodiversity protection overlay is missing over Milford. Nobody knows why. DPIPWE doesn't know why. It should be there, and it's not. Their representation was this should be assessed as if it were there. But the fact is, it is not and therefore we cannot force any assessment because it falls through this loophole in the planning scheme, which is not the intent of this. I find that particularly challenging, personally, to think that this environment and these orchids and the other threatened species are now being treated in this way. I don't regard that as a particularly good process at the moment.

I don't believe we have been provided an adequate mechanism to gain information or have a fair process in challenging some of these conclusions. As you heard from Mr Goc, the first time he's heard about some of this stuff is today. I'm still hearing things this week that I've never been told about before. After two and a half years, you would expect to have received more information about some of these things.

I think due diligence and accountability has been lacking. In summary, I don't believe that it adequately answers the five questions that are put to you. I don't believe it meets the legislative requirements and there's a couple of other factors that I'll leave out of the discussion at the moment.

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In a way, it's too late. When you're looking at spending public money, and I'll put my economist hat on, you have to be fairly certain that this is the best way of doing it. Okay, it's too late now, the Government's decided on this; but it was brought to a head at the Clarence Council meeting where they approved the DA. They put in two conditions that they hoped would be strong enough to get State Growth to negotiate with us. Unfortunately, State Growth came to my property in front of Mr Curry, talked to us for two hours and then said, 'We're taking your accesses away anyway'. That's not consultation, that's just telling you something.

We have to look at the costs a little bit and be sure what you're spending on for this phase is the right thing to do. For example, I've lived there for 22 years and I've seen and experienced the traffic a lot. I can see out my window where the bottlenecks are, and there's clearly a bottleneck at Midway Point, which is in a pinch-point, as you called it earlier.

Those works will be finished by the middle of next year, and maybe we can look how much of that will alleviate the issues on this stretch before we build the part outside Milford. The bottlenecks have been at Hobart Airport interchange, Midway Point and at Sorell. You can see it on the causeway. You can go onto Google Earth and you can look at the traffic. You can see the little red line snaking along. I know where they are.

Maybe something that should be considered is that this section isn't necessarily the one to do next. If you're going to proceed with this, why not leave this until we really need to do it. By that time we might have been able to bring in, for example, an offset of one hectare that's been planted and it might that it's going to take at least 10 years before the orchids can be moved into it. There're some orchids being cultivated at the Botanical Gardens. They can maybe do that.

**CHAIR** - They're cultivating the threatened species?

**Ms LEWIS** - They've managed to propagate. They took 10 years to get the Caladenia to succeed, the white-flowered ones - the sagicola - they've managed to grow some from seed after 10 years of trying.

**CHAIR** - Is that the highest threatened species?

**Ms LEWIS** - No, the other one they haven't been able to even start on yet. There's 670 of those and there's about 300 of the other ones.

In terms of global scale, neither are very much. You can't grow them at home. You're talking about orchid seed. If you use vanilla, the orchid seeds are the little black specks in vanilla - that's how big they are. You have to have the fungus out of Milford forest. It's a very tedious process.

**CHAIR** - About as big as a fern seed.

**Ms LEWIS** - Yes, it's almost a spore, in a way. I think buying time is of benefit to the environment and would certainly be of benefit to the process as well.

In terms of question one, I have a lot of trouble. It says -

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Does the proposed works meet and identify need or needs that will solve the recognised problem?

What is the problem we're solving here? If you look at the DA, it says -

... to ensure the Clarence municipalities will plan a livable city with services and supporting infrastructure.

This can't be the strategic objective of this project because it's on periphery of Clarence. It's clearly an arterial road designed to serve Sorell, the southern beaches, Tasman and Arthur Highways and so on.

That was more reflected in the project's first submission to the EPBC, which closely aligned with the SETS or the Southern Integrated Transport Plan of 2010, which identifies the arterial nature of both the Tasman and Arthur Highways for commuters being the major residential growth. In particular, there is going to be a lot projected growth for the southern beaches as well.

Given the regional nature of the project, I believe that the planning process should have been, and maybe still should be, before you spend \$28 million looking at a more regional multi-municipal nature of this project.

Let's look past the next election, or even the next two elections. What are the benefits? Where are we going? What do we want to do? Has anyone taken in, for example, the impact of COVID-19, and the fact that 35 per cent of people are now working from home, and don't need to commute? No.

What is going to happen when Sorell gets more services? Brighton is trying to build more into an economic centre, so there will be less commuting.

I think the public needs to be consulted more about solutions that will improve regional accessibility at the moment. Consultation, to my mind, has been just on which one of options one to five is the best one, rather than looking at a whole overlay of what is going on.

If the purpose is regional accessibility, the only options that effectively address that are options one and option two - the two that were thrown out the window early on because of the golf club.

The remaining three options were only discussed with limited groups. We heard earlier that there are 155 surveys completed. I saw somewhere else that there were more.

The most frequently stated response was that an alternative crossing point should be considered, either at Seven Mile Beach to connect with southern beaches, or from Cambridge to connect with the western end of Shark Point Road. It would appear that this feedback has not been taken on board by anybody.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**CHAIR** - It is the train line, actually.

**Ms LEWIS** - No. There is the train line as well, but that is more circuitous, because then you have to go through Sorell to get down to the southern beaches.

The consultation referral report was put out for further public comment in December 2019, and the results of that were not released until 7 October this year.

There is little change from the public input. Responses such as public transport that have been considered, I don't particularly regard as adequate.

I really think some of these should be implemented first, before spending additional millions of public dollars on a road-widening project, when it has been demonstrated worldwide that if you widen roads, more cars use them.

In response to my question, I don't believe the identified need has been articulated. I don't believe the planning approval process was fit for the need identified in the EPBC referral. I don't believe community consultation has enabled discussion to meet the needs most accurately described in SETS.

I don't believe it is possible for you to answer question one, with the information that you currently have.

**CHAIR** - I am just looking at the time. We do have all of your submission. If there are two or three things that you felt were the main issues with the project, that might be a way forward.

**Ms LEWIS** - That might be a way forward. Well, as current custodian, I believe it is my responsibility to do my best for these species. The responsibility has fallen on my shoulders. I am not going to walk away from that.

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

I absolutely believe it is non-negotiable that I have a proper access, which we have started to discuss at the tribunal, but has yet to be resolved. The fire access needs to be resolved,

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because if the forest goes up in fire, the orchids are gone, but it is also a huge risk to Hobart Airport.

If I light a bonfire on my property I have to ring the airport control tower. Those guys are on to me if I light something. It's a very big risk. Smoke drift over the airport is important because they have to divert planes. There's a massive public safety aspect.

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

**CHAIR** - TasWater goes -

**Ms LEWIS** - They drive in off the highway. There's a path inside my fence.

**CHAIR** - Yes, that's right.

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

**CHAIR** - Where would that gate be?

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

**CHAIR** - Right near the corner?

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

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

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

But the third main thing is what really concerns me. The planning rules apply to the golf club, which has far more degraded forest than we have. We've got pristine forest, in excellent condition, not being subject to the same treatment because of this missing biodiversity overlay, and I really believe that it should be.

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

**CHAIR** - What needs to be independently supervised?

**Ms LEWIS** - There needs to be a construction management plan that is actually supervised. There has to be accountability. There's no point saying to Hazell Bros -

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**CHAIR** - Are you talking about for the main -

**Ms LEWIS** - Yes, for the main roads, the works. Along the strip, particularly outside the orchids, there needs to be a construction management plan, and there needs to be some accountability, because someone drives a bulldozer in.

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

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

Those are the main aspects, I guess. Drainage is the other one, which we talked about earlier.

**CHAIR** - Obviously, you've given us a very detailed submission.

**Ms LEWIS** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - You're obviously very passionate, too, about the environment and you take that very seriously. Any questions from members?

**Ms BUTLER** - You've covered just about everything I was going to ask. Thank you very much.

**Mr TUCKER** - I've probably got questions towards Sven -

**CHAIR** - The department will come back.

**Mr TUCKER** - when he comes back, because I'm concerned when you talk about B-doubles accessing your property.

**Ms LEWIS** - They can't now. The way it stands at the moment, unless I'm given an access off Pittwater Road, I'll never be able to have a B double in again.

**Mr TUCKER** - You have access for B doubles at the moment on that road?

**Ms LEWIS** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - On that corner?

**Ms LEWIS** - No, off the driveway at the moment. They do come in.

**CHAIR** - That's your main driveway, right on that corner?

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**Ms LEWIS** - That's the main driveway, on that corner, but that will be cut off and they can't drive over the causeway, so I'm cut off.

**CHAIR** - Would they ever come from the west to that driveway? They wouldn't be crossing the road?

**Ms LEWIS** - Usually not, but I don't know. I had deliveries from Brighton recently and I don't exactly know how they get there but we have to -

**Mr TUCKER** - I'm wondering whether they have an access to be on the road at the moment.

**Ms LEWIS** - They're allowed up to the corner officially.

**Mr TUCKER** - Where do you call 'the corner'?

**Ms LEWIS** - The corner of Pittwater Road.

**Mr TUCKER** - Right.

**Ms LEWIS** - That's the only way in at the moment but the main constraint is the causeways and through Midway Point at the moment.

**Mr TUCKER** - Yes.

**Ms LEWIS** - Legally, you're not allowed on the causeways so it means that I can't have them in from either direction. If I do get a new driveway, it won't be any problem - they can go down Pittwater Road and come in that way. It's one thing that I really would like to see reinstated.

**Mr TUCKER** - Because there is -

**Ms LEWIS** - There's a map. It's on the State Growth website where they're allowed to go.

**CHAIR** - I thought there was a B double that came out of the pine forest there this morning when we were down -

**Ms LEWIS** - They're allowed on Pittwater Road, just not across the causeway.

**CHAIR** - I think it was carting logs. It was, those chainsaws -

**Ms LEWIS** - The piners use them every day.

**Mr TUCKER** - The other thing, I can understand the advantage of straight roads. I always thought about straight roads that way. My conversation since then has been that straight roads actually cause you more accidents than curvy roads, which I found was quite interesting and that's what the data - I would be interested to see what it says on that -

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**Ms LEWIS** - I'm not an expert.

**Mr TUCKER** - - today again, to confirm that.

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Ms LEWIS** - I think the formula for reduced travel times and the whole benefit of the 100 kilometres per hour straight versus 80 kilometres per hour with a dangerous corner in it, that would be very interesting to look at, but I'm not an expert on crashes.

**Mr TUCKER** - I won't ask any more.

**CHAIR** - Okay. Thank you very much again for your presentation.

**Ms LEWIS** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Just to remind you, before you go - you are probably sick of hearing this because -

**Ms LEWIS** - No, it's all right.

**CHAIR** - As we advised at the commencement, the evidence that you've been giving and what you've said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table, you need to be aware that privilege does not attach to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you're just repeating what you've said to us. Do you understand that?

**Ms LEWIS** - Yes, I do. Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

**Ms LEWIS** - Thank you very much.

**CHAIR** - Thank you for your time.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**

**CHAIR** - If we can have the department back, please, that would be good.



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Mr SVEN MEYER and Mr HOWARD MITCHELL WERE RECALLED AND EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** - You've heard probably most of the concerns and issues. We will deal with them one at a time.

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

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

**CHAIR** - Let's get this clear. Which access are we talking about? The one really close to the corner?

**Mr MEYER** - Yes, that's correct.

**CHAIR** - And another further down or only one access?

**Mr MEYER** - I think the one further down is the access to the property that Ms Lewis is talking about.

**Mr TUCKER** - That one there on the corner? That's where Mr Cocker was talking about, on this corner here into access?

**Mr MEYER** - I missed it, sorry. Where did he want an access?

**Mr TUCKER** - Just here.

**Mr MEYER** - Right. We're looking at putting one ideally about there or something, yes.

**CHAIR** - It's almost opposite those double gates that we looked at this morning?

**Mr TUCKER** - No, the opposite or, because the double gates are down here.

**Mr MEYER** - Maybe a little bit further back, yes.

**CHAIR** - Okay.

**Mr TUCKER** - I can understand it can't be right on the corner.

**Mr MEYER** - No, that's right. Yes.

**CHAIR** - Is that one access or two accesses we're talking about?

**Mr MEYER** - The design includes a gateway for access for TasWater to service their pipeline and for Hobart Airport.

**CHAIR** - That's the one closest to the corner?

**Mr MEYER** - No, there's only one access, sorry.

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**CHAIR** - Yes. Okay. What about the access required by Milford?

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

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

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

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

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

**Mr TUCKER** - Can I ask while we are here talking about accesses, do B doubles have access all the way down this road at the moment or not?

**Mr MEYER** - I don't think they do, no.

**Mr TUCKER** - Can you take that question on notice and provide that information back to us where access is allowed with B doubles, because they have got limited access to major highways. Am I correct in my thinking there with that?

**Mr MEYER** - Yes, unless they're under permit situations.

**CHAIR** - They have got to be major roads before they can even get on them.

**Mr TUCKER** - Yes, there's very limited access they have.

**Mr MEYER** - Under permanent arrangements you can do the B doubles in lots of locations, but yes.

**CHAIR** - Pine harvesting, is it, that happens, where B doubles are allowed to use Pittwater Road because of that or not?

**Mr MEYER** - I am not sure.

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**CHAIR** - You don't know. Perhaps you could confirm?

**Mr TUCKER** - While we are talking about the pines, just off the subject a little bit, the pines, are they state government-owned or who owns the pines down there, all the way down Pittwater Road?

**Mr MEYER** - I don't know.

**Mr MITCHELL** - Previously, and this is going back two or three years, I did have a discussion with Crown Land Services, who I think administer that area of Seven Mile Peninsula, so I think they might do either pine operations and maybe some sandmining down there. They said that those things will go on for a number of years, perhaps decades, but eventually their plans for that peninsula is more of a recreational-type facility so they didn't see it as an area that would be developed in the future. We were interested in whether, long term, traffic would be increasing on Pittwater Road but the indication that I got from Crown Land Services was that it's used for those pine and forestry-type purposes at the moment. I think there might be some horse-riding and things down there and I think, long term, it is going to be retained more for those recreational purposes rather than for forestry or sand operations.

**Mr TUCKER** - They're obviously not privately owned then?

**Mr MITCHELL** - No, I don't believe so.

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

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

**Mr TUCKER** - Can we talk a little bit about Lewis's Corner in here, where the proposal was to put a straight road through. I have asked this question before and I have been howled down because I say, 'Straight roads, you won't have as many accidents', but it's the opposite, isn't it? The straighter the road the more accidents that we generally have, or am I wrong with what I've been told?

**Mr MEYER** - I think it depends on the length of the straightness, doesn't it, do you think, Howard?

**Mr MITCHELL** - I don't know. Neither of us are traffic engineers, to really give you a qualified answer on this.

**Mr TUCKER** - Could you get a qualified answer around that situation?

**Mr MEYER** - I think if you have a very long, straight road that goes for 10 kilometres, then yes, your sense of concentration isn't as good as it may be otherwise.

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**Ms BUTLER** - In relation to this answer you can probably only provide a hypothetical; but an issue which was raised was Clarence Council moving a motion in relation to the golf course not being able to be closed down, I believe. There was some understanding -

**Mr MEYER** - That was correct, yes.

**Ms BUTLER** - Did that automatically take that off the table as an alternative for where the road might go?

**Mr MEYER** - No. This is a state Government project. They are one very important stakeholder, so we took that into consideration along with all other comments.

**Ms BUTLER** - All right.

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

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

**Ms BUTLER** - Can I ask some questions around Barilla Bay? Are we ready to go onto that yet?

**CHAIR** - We'll just finish this one off. There were two other concerns that were raised. One was the construction management plan. Will there be a construction management plan to make sure that this special forest, I'll put it that way, very special, is appropriately dealt with?

**Mr MEYER** - For every construction contract we put out, the contractor has to do a construction environmental management plan. That's no different for this one. In terms of this project, because we're going through the EPBC assessment there are additional conditions that will come through that process that they'll have to incorporate into their construction management plan.

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

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

**CHAIR** - The other aspect was buying time, in other words, just leaving this for a while. Obviously, the longer it takes to commence construction, the less impact it's going to have on the vegetation. What are the timelines - what are the possibilities of extending that until you've got the survey, for instance, as was brought up by Mr Curry, I think it was, in his submission, saying that the survey's not being done until November -

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**Mr MEYER** - As I said before, the survey is done every November. We've looked at all the information for the last - I'm not sure, in history. We've actually done the surveys with Andy North, North Barker, on the property. I think we've done three years in a row. When we submitted our EPBC referral last October, they again asked us to go back last year in November and do another one. So, I guess every year it goes on. There's another survey you can do.

**CHAIR** - That's true except that you're in a circumstance where you're in appeal. Is it likely that that's going to take some time before that's dealt with anyway, and so could you wait until that survey's completed?

**Mr MEYER** - The appeal decision will be completed by 20 December.

**CHAIR** - So, the survey happens in November? So, that means the survey will be complete, whether it is written up is another thing I suppose. Can you see yourself waiting for the results of that survey?

**Mr MEYER** - We weren't intending to do another survey because then we would have to amend the whole EPBC referral process again.

So, we have done numerous surveys on site. There are no direct impacts on any orchids and it does not impact on any of the core habitats for orchids. It does impact on potential habitat for orchids. It is going through a very extensive EPBC assessment and those experts will look at all the information that will be put before them.

**CHAIR** - You can't see yourself waiting until that November one is finished. It might turn up new ones, it might not. It might actually show that they are further away.

**Mr MEYER** - Correct. And either way you would have to update the EPBC referral.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Mr MEYER** - You can do anything of course.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**CHAIR** - We will take what you are saying on board to see how we go with this. With respect to Mr Goc, he talked about exemptions so you didn't have to deal with his issues. Can you describe what the circumstance was there? Why you were not forced to deal with issues of stormwater and the like?

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

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

**Mr MEYER** - They were consulted, but I guess -

**CHAIR** - Well you heard what he had to say.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**CHAIR** - You will consult with him on that?

**Mr MEYER** - Sure.

**Mr TUCKER** - That is something you need to include in the DA won't you with the signage because that would come under council for putting signs up.

**Mr MEYER** - That is for the directional signs, that is different to his private business sign.

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

**Mr MEYER** - There are two reasons. For the Hobart Airport interchange when you are coming from Kennedy Drive, there is a slip lane which comes down the side of the highway

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and then merges onto the highway. The merge length between that and the start is 900 metres which is the minimum of that speed. If you then have an access there that is also too close, it is only 100 metres away from the next access which is the traffic signals, so that is too close and is cause for accidents.

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

**CHAIR** - They would be travelling over a road, where the cars might be going a higher speed than if they are doing a left or right. Is that what you are saying?

**Ms BUTLER** - Just to go back to that point, Rob. I think what you were meaning was by a left-turn opportunity into the business, but not coming out onto the road.

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Ms BUTLER** - Being able to pull in on the 80 kilometre per hour section -

**Mr MEYER** - That is the current arrangement.

**Ms BUTLER** - Not pulling out. Would that really lead to more accidents? I am not a traffic expert at all, but they are not coming out onto the traffic. They are pulling off into -

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

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

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

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

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

**CHAIR** - Just for the record, Mr Curry raised the issue of not much talk about the environment. Can you just appraise the committee of the level of work that was done in relation



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to environmental aspects to deal with the orchids and the like? You talk about North Barker and those sorts of things. Can you just tell us how much work actually went into that?

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

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

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

**Mr MEYER** - Oh no. Significant. A stack of reports like this.

**CHAIR** - He makes his hand 300mm high, for *Hansard*.

Do any other members wish to bring up any other issues that were brought up by the representors?

Quite clearly, consultation, lack of rigour, were concerns. Issues around viability of businesses and the like as to how this might impact. I think we have dealt with most of the issues. Wind change, and the wind effect across the site. Those sorts of things were considered. We didn't have any comments on that. Do we have any further comment on taking out the trees and causing possible detrimental effects to the orchids?

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

**CHAIR** - How far are you moving that?

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

**CHAIR** - Yes.

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

**CHAIR** - You're waiting on that?

**Mr MEYER** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - We can't do much about the EPBC, that's for them to deal with. The planning application is for that process and -

**Mr MEYER** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - I think we've covered everything. Members, any other questions?

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**Ms BUTLER** - No. Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Okay. Thank you and, just to remind you, before you leave, we do have those questions that we put to you. This is something that has received significant critique from Ms Lewis - you wouldn't have that, I suppose, as part of your submissions? Have you got this?

**Mr MEYER** - It was provided to us just then.

**CHAIR** - You have?

**Mr MEYER** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Yes. I encourage you to look at those and maybe some of those points that are raised - because there was a significant number of them - are interesting to note. I need a clear yes or no on these and I'm not going to go through and prosecute things again -

**Mr MEYER** - Sure.

**CHAIR** - - because in the whole you've given us evidence. Does the proposed works meet an identified need or needs or solve a recognised problem?

**Mr MEYER** - Yes, it does.

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

**Mr MEYER** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Are the proposed works fit for purpose?

**Mr MEYER** - Yes.

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

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

**CHAIR** - Do the proposed works provide - are the proposed works fit for purpose and you said, 'Yes.'

**Mr MEYER** - Yes.

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

**Mr MEYER** - Yes, they do.

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

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

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

**Mr MEYER** - Yes, they are.

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

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

**CHAIR** - Okay. Thank you. Before you leave, just to advise you, as we did at the start, what you've said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table you need to be aware that privilege does not attach to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you're just repeating what you said. Do you understand that?

**Mr MEYER and Mr Mitchell** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Thank you for coming today.

**Mr MEYER** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Thank you to the members of the public who are watching the presentation, as well as those who are with us in the audience today.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**