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THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET AT OATLANDS COMMUNITY HALL, 1 GAY STREET, OATLANDS ON FRIDAY, 2 JUNE 2017.

MIDLANDS HIGHWAY SAFETY UPGRADE - ST PETERS PASS TO SOUTH OF TUNBRIDGE

Mr TED ROSS, PROJECT DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH, **Mr DAMIEN DRY**, PROJECT MANAGER, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH, AND **Mr JONATHON ELLIOT**, CONSULTANT PROJECT MANAGER, JACOBS PTY LTD WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mrs Rylah) - Thank you for appearing before the committee. We are pleased to hear your evidence today. Before we begin hearing your evidence, I inform you of some of the important aspects of the committee proceedings.

A committee hearing is a proceeding in the 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 afforded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside the confines of the parliamentary proceeding. This is a public hearing. Members of the public and journalists may be present and this means your evidence may be reported. Do you understand? If so, say 'Yes'.

Messrs ROSS, DRY and ELLIOT - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you. Would you like to make an opening statement?

Mr DRY - I thank the committee for allowing us to come today to present this project. I would like to present the people with me. First, we have Ted Ross, project director for the Midland Highway; I also have Jon Elliott, who works for Jacob Consulting. Jon is the project manager on the consultant side. I am Damien Dry, the project manager with the Department of State Growth.

The project we are presenting today is St Peters Pass to south of Tunbridge. It is a 10.7-kilometre project; it is part of our Midland Highway 10-year action strategy, which is all about improving safety on the highway. As part of this, we are looking to increase the star rating - AusRAP rating - to a nationally accredited three-star rating along this section of road that we are improving. We are doing this through a variety of treatments. The first of these is a central median flexible safety barrier which will reduce head-on collisions. We are also looking to remove roadside hazards and also protect them where we can't remove them. We will be providing a 2-metre sealed shoulder. We will also be installing audible edge lines, which make the rumble sound when you drive over them. We are also looking to minimise breaks in the flexible safety barrier.

So a little bit more about this project: as I said, we are looking to upgrade a 10.7-kilometre section of highway this summer. We will be installing three northbound overtaking lanes and three

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southbound overtaking lanes, in a 2 + 1 configuration that will leapfrog along, which is in line with our state strategy for the highway. We will be installing three turning facilities - one at Sorell Springs Road; one at Antill Ponds and also one at Old Tier Road. I think that is a little overview of the strategy. We are happy to answer any questions.

CHAIR - Thank you. Questions?

Mr VALENTINE - Quite obviously the submissions we received are concerned about a number of heritage aspects of this - or how it may impact on heritage buildings and avenues, and those sorts of things. Can you give us an overview as to those aspects? How are you dealing with that? How much impact will there be on established plants and buildings, and how will you mitigate some of that, or otherwise? Could you just give us an overview on those lines?

Mr DRY - Yes, certainly. Your question was about heritage and landscaping. The department has endeavoured to consult with all the property owners along this length of highway for both heritage and also the landscaping aspects. I will speak first about the landscaping. In this space, the department has engaged an arborist and also a landscape architect to look at the features of the landscaping through this section of highway. They have come back with a plan that we will be looking to implement, which will bring to light the Pioneer Avenue nature of this section of the highway. We will also be looking to remove some vegetation in some areas for safety reasons. We will be looking to offset that with additional plantings in line with the nature of the highway in this area. That is what we are doing with the landscaping area.

In the heritage space, we have consulted with all the property owners, especially those who have heritage properties along the section. Where we need to take land for widening the road, we endeavour to take the smallest amount possible. In some other areas, we have also consulted with other landowners that have heritage properties and taken some of their concerns on board regarding plantings and also, I suppose, access.

Mr VALENTINE - What percentage of trees marked as heritage trees are actually going to be taken out in this project? What are you actually doing with regard to the heritage trees taken out of the system?

Mr DRY - Certainly. From memory - I'm sure Jon can correct me - there are only two Pioneer Avenue heritage trees that we're looking to move as part of this project -

Mr VALENTINE - Move or remove?

Mr DRY - Remove. In terms of re-establishing other trees, we have been looking to follow a similar vein of existing plantings with the European trees that were planted as part of the Pioneer Avenue. I cannot speak to how many exactly we will be replanting, but it would be vastly more than two. I would say in the range of potentially 100 additional trees will form part of this new avenue.

Mr VALENTINE - Some of the concerns with regard to the topiaries on the - if we're going north - right side near - can't think of the name of the property; just prior to -

CHAIR - Kenmore.

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Mr VALENTINE - The property of Kenmore - going through the avenue that currently exists now?

Mr ROSS - That is part of the York Plains.

Mr VALENTINE - Sorry, we're not that far south. Okay, so that's fine. That then leaves the issue with the main building of Woodbury. How have you gone with negotiating impacts on Woodbury itself? In their submission they raised issues about the curtilage of the building and the importance of following the Burra Charter. How have you handled that side of the road? How much impact will it have?

Mr DRY - In terms of landscaping?

Mr VALENTINE - Landscaping in the first instance, yes, and then the road. How much it is going encroach?

Mr DRY - In that section -

Mr LLEWELLYN - You might add has it had any relation to the inundation and water associated with that as well?

Mr ROSS - We have worked very closely with the property owner and we have consulted in regards to all the works that were undertaken. The first point we make with the Woodbury property is that we have avoided any acquisition altogether from the property so the highway is not any closer to the property on that -

Mr VALENTINE - In terms of the road reserve, you mean?

Mr ROSS - Yes, so there is no change in the road reserve on the Woodbury side of the highway. We have avoided any impact by making sure that we did not encroach at all on the heritage property.

Second, in regards to vegetation along the boundary, again, we have tried to minimise any impact. In fact we have retained some vegetation in the actual road reserve as part of trying to retain some screening to reduce any impact on the heritage property.

Third, in relation to flood risk, the department has undertaken a significant amount of modelling and monitoring of the catchment. As a result of that analysis, we are actually increasing the capacity of the culverts underneath the road. We are also removing a lot of the vegetation - there are a lot of suckers through there that we are removing -

Mr LLEWELLYN - On the eastern side of the road?

Mr ROSS - Yes, on both sides of the road. On the railway side of the road we are putting a concrete swale and doing a number of measures around reducing the risk of flooding to the property.

Mr VALENTINE - That culvert you are talking about - you are actually putting in another culvert? So you will have two culverts?

Mr ROSS - Yes. We have an existing 1200 culvert and an existing 3 metre by 1.5 metre culvert. We will be installing an additional 1200 culvert directly in front of Woodbury House.

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Mr VALENTINE - Sorry, when you say 3 metres by 1.5, are you talking about -

Mr ROSS - That is the cross-section.

Mr VALENTINE - That is the cross-section - 3 metres -

Mr ROSS - It is 3 metres wide by 1.5 metres high.

Mr VALENTINE - Is it 1.5 metres?

Mr SHELTON - On the issue of vegetation: I travel up and down the highway all the time and I have particularly noticed - not necessarily on the Woodbury side, but on the left-hand side coming down the eastern side - a significant amount of sucker regeneration between the railway line and the highway. As part of this development, from a farming point of view, in order to prevent flooding, you need the water to get down the creek or down the river so it is not backing up. Anything that prevents that - keeps the water back - holds the water back and creates a larger flood upstream. Is that vegetation being removed? I would not like to think that vegetation is classed as some sort of heritage vegetation. I would not consider that to be. What is the department doing about that?

Mr ROSS - The only area we are protecting in terms of that is the screening in front of Woodbury House. Along the opposite side of the road, where we are adding an additional lane and widening the road, we will be removing any vegetation within the envelope of the works or within the drainage envelopes.

Mr LLEWELLYN - That continues north down around the curve as far as the water downstream of Woodbury homestead in order to get that water away? You are not intending to plant anything down there and create -

Mr ROSS - No, there will be no plantings. The works we're undertaking will be clearing out drains and improving them and, as I said, reducing the risk of flooding out there.

CHAIR - In terms of the ongoing maintenance in that area of the highway, I see an issue with the slashing and clearing of the roadsides. What is the State Growth Department's arrangements in regard to making what I would see as a better job in terms of getting that water away and making sure the water can get away?

Mr ROSS - There are a couple of things in regard to that. One, we have existing routine maintenance, which would be routinely slashing roadside vegetation. Second, where we are putting in this concrete swale we are trying to install infrastructure that has minimum maintenance requirements. Third, as part of the design handover to our maintenance team, we will explain to them certain aspects of the project that will require ongoing maintenance.

That is around the culvert locations - the entrances to properties specifically - and in this case, we have already had conversations with our maintenance people about the fact that we are trying to work with the landowner with the shielding - the screening - of the property. Again we will be alerting maintenance that we are leaving those suckers there to screen the property, but that the area between there and the road needs to be maintained according to our routine maintenance requirements.

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CHAIR - So the suckers that are not in the area where we want to keep screening will be cut and poisoned so we are not looking at the same thing in 10 or 15 years' time?

Mr ROSS - That would be our advice to our maintenance area to make sure they understand the reason why we have designed the road and kept that area clear. That will then be the responsibility of the maintenance area.

Mr SHELTON - Not everybody, of course, in the community agrees with wire rope down the middle and the safety issues that brings with it. In this section we have some overtaking lanes, how many metres of overtaking lane do we have now compared to where we will be in the future? Is there a calculation about that or not?

Mr ROSS - At the moment there is only one section of separated overtaking, if you like. Just north of St Peters Pass Rest Area, there is a dual overtaking lanes, so if we made an assessment and said that currently there's two overtaking areas, one for north and one for south. In the future, there will be five across the project, so there will be three north and three south.

Mr SHELTON - So there will be significantly more overtaking opportunities under this design than we have there presently?

Mr ROSS - Yes.

Mr LLEWELLYN - I will just reserve any comments until after hearing witnesses.

Mr VALENTINE - The wire rope barrier - Ted talks about the appropriateness of wire rope barriers. I know there are people who do not necessarily like them - they are usually motorcyclists, like myself - but has any further consideration been given to adding something like a light steel component to stop motorcyclists actually hitting those posts? Has any further consideration been given to that? You know the type I am talking about - they have that lower continuous steel on the Armco railing - that smooth lower part?

Mr ROSS - Generally we put that kind of design in very tight corner environments - slower speeds. This project, for example, has a curve just south of the Woodbury access where we have straightened the road a bit by reducing the curve. We are trying to actually reduce the risk of motorcyclists falling off their motorbike by making the road straighter.

The treatment you are talking about is very difficult to apply in very high speed environments. Where possible we have tried to actually straighten the road and improve the camber of the road to make it safer overall.

Mr VALENTINE - In relation to the median barrier, the turning points - some of submissions - and one of them from Woodbury - talks about the need to go, under the original proposal, a further 8 kilometres - 4 kilometres up, 4 kilometres back - to get to the property because you cannot directly turn in to the right if you are going south. Can you explain how you might have mitigated a bit of that due to that concern?

Mr ROSS - The overall strategy of the Midland Highway is to provide regular turning facilities, and we do that every 3 to 5 kilometres. Generally all accesses are left-in, left-out, so therefore, it is not going to be a break every location where we have an access. Generally all

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accesses are left-in, left-out. At the Woodbury access, they have to turn left. If they want to head south out of their access, they will have to turn left and go north.

Mr VALENTINE - How far?

Mr ELLIOTT - About 1.3 kilometres.

Mr ROSS - So 1.3 kilometres north to Old Tier Road where they can turn and head south. If they are heading south along the highway and they want to turn back into their access, they will have to go beyond their access for a distance of 2.9 kilometres for a light vehicle and further, 4 kilometres, to Sorell Springs where they can do a turn and then travel back. That is within our strategy of 3 to 5 kilometres.

Mr VALENTINE - Just for the record, with respect to the possible future use of that property as a tourism venture, which is mentioned in their submission, they were thinking it would obviously be better for them to have the direct left-right turn out of their property. You know the turn that is done at Bisdee Tier. As you come north, you get to the Bisdee Tier turnoff and they tell you to turn left and then go straight across the road at the first opportunity, just so you are not stopped in the fast-moving traffic. Is that not an option here?

Mr ROSS - We have met with the owners of the property on a number of occasions and undertaken considerable work to look at different alternatives and options. We have not been able to find the path to develop a suitable option to put a break in the barrier at this location.

Mr VALENTINE - Is that because of the distance between the railway line and the road?

Mr ROSS - There are a number of reasons. One is the location and the fact we have the location of the overtaking lanes which constrains the section. The railway is also located on one side and is very close. We also have the heritage property on the other side. Also the assessment of the turning movements in and out of the property and the degree of those movements has not warranted a break in the barrier.

Mr VALENTINE - The other option was a 1 + 1 at that point rather than a 2 + 1. What is your opinion on that?

Mr ROSS - If we remove the overtaking section, it would be against the strategy because we would no longer have the frequency of overtaking that we are trying to achieve to reduce driver frustration. Right now as you drive along that section, it is a single dotted line down the middle where people regularly overtake. I think it would be very difficult to justify removing the overtaking lanes from that section.

Mr VALENTINE - Are the accidents rates there high? Do you know what the rates are?

Mr ELLIOT - No.

Mr SHELTON - One last question on wire ropes and widths and so on. People suggest that wire ropes are not a good thing. I agree - safety-wise, yes, they certainly have safety benefits.

The anti-wire rope people suggest there is a bit of an issue here. For example, when a 2.4 metre truck has a tyre problem and pulls up on the side of the road in the single lane, there will not be

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much room if there is a 3.5 metre lane, a 2 metre shoulder and about 1 metre in the middle before the road. Presumably they will not be right on the barrier - they might be 600 out, so that is 3 metres. The safety of the person who has to pull the wheel off, with the traffic going past, is compromised. We are using national specifications here - that is, the typical approach used by the other states and territories. However, a breakdown in a single lane presents an issue for anybody attending to that broken-down vehicle because the gap left is extremely narrow for traffic.

Mr ROSS - In a single lane, for us the worst case scenario would be where you have wire rope in the middle and wire rope on the edge. Where we have those situations, our standard is for a minimum of 7 metres between the median fence and the fence on the edge. Where the cross section is 4.5 to 5.5 to 6 metres, you would have an extra metre before you have another wire rope barrier. That is not only for breakdowns but also for routine maintenance or medical or emergency vehicles.

Mr SHELTON - This is more for my information than the committee's - the standard you have used on this job: has that standard been around long? Some of the ones I've looked at appear to be narrower than that. Has a narrower standard been used in the past?

Mr ROSS - Yes. With some of the original work done at Constitution Hill and even some work on the Symmons Plains sections were. We have been increasing the width of the single lane.

Mr SHELTON - So we learn by experience and it is now okay. Thank you.

Mr LLEWELLYN - Probably self-evident, but could you comment about the possibility, particularly for the area we are talking about, of any underpasses that might mediate the issue? I am talking about smaller vehicle underpasses.

Mr ROSS - There is one. The closest one is at Old Tier Road. There is an underpass there regularly used by the landowner to transfer stock from one side of the road to the other. I guess one of the issues in this location we have is that it is already low in that area. There is not sufficient room on the other side to construct something to be able to then turn vehicles back up the road.

Mr VALENTINE - Consideration of the left-hand barrier and shoulder: we do get cyclists using that road - not all that often, but they do use it. A lot of them go down the east coast. What protection is there for cyclists? Is it on the other side of the barrier? Is it a road barrier on the left as well as in the middle?

Mr ROSS - What we have is 3.5 metres lane and a 2 metre shoulder.

Mr VALENTINE - So it is just that shoulder? So they would be able to get away from fast-moving traffic if they extended it out 1.5 metres?

Mr ROSS - The other thing we are providing on the highway is very good forward and full sight distance. For us, that is improving so if a motorist is travelling down the highway, they can see the cyclists a lot sooner and can moderate their speed accordingly.

Mr VALENTINE - I am just thinking of the law though that says we have to give 1.5 metres berth to a cyclist. If you are in a truck that is - how wide?

Mr SHELTON - It is 2.4 metres.

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Mr VALENTINE - That is 2.4 metres wide in a lane that is 3.5 - it does not give the cyclist much room - it does not give the truck driver much room to actually skirt the cyclist. Is there an argument that the shoulder ought to be wider there or not?

Mr ROSS - I think 2 metres is a very generous shoulder if you are looking at urban areas. Cycle lanes are generally 1.5 metres wide. I think there is sufficient room if the cyclist is within the shoulder area for a vehicle to pass and provide the 1 to 1.5 metres separation, even if they have to use part of the central median.

Mr VALENTINE - Even a truck doing 100 kilometres per hour - most of them do 110 kilometres -

Mr SHELTON - They are limited to 100 kilometres; they can't do any more.

Mr VALENTINE - Can't they? So 2 metres, according to an Australian standard, would that be enough on a highway? Could you give me some indication?

Mr ROSS - I think what the project is providing is significantly better than what we currently have. If you read some standards, they suggest we have the significant differential in the speed between vehicles and cyclists; you ideally would have them completely in a separate lane clear of the highway.

Mr VALENTINE - The delineators on the posts to the left as you are going through the section, the 2 metre shoulder is outside of that, is to the left of that again?

Mr ELLIOTT - No. There is a 2 metre shoulder, then there is the barrier as per the code.

Mr SHELTON - Then you have a metre, then 3.5, then 2.

Mr VALENTINE - Yes. That is all right. They are going to have a clear 2 metres? They are not going to be running into posts? That is all I am concerned about.

Mr ELLIOTT - The other thing you find with these traffic lanes is we have the rumble strip along the edge.

Mr VALENTINE - They will be outside that?

Mr ELLIOTT - They will be outside that; there is a clear delineation for vehicles that they have to travel one side of that.

Mr VALENTINE - Thank you.

CHAIR - I would just like to refer to the submission we received. I wonder why, on the project programming costs, it is indicated - in the critical path list - that for the project before the Public Works Committee, our approval is not critical. Why is that?

Mr ROSS - The critical path does not refer to how important an activity is. The critical path refers to the fact that, for example, if this hearing were held in a month's time, it would not delay the commencement of the construction. While this hearing is taking place, other activities are

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occurring in parallel, including detailed design and preparation of the tender documents. That is where the critical path lies in terms of delivering the project on time.

CHAIR - I would also like to ask another question about the DA approval. You said in your submission that the DA was refused and you are intending to appeal that decision. Can you just update us on where that is at?

Mr DRY - Certainly. When we wrote the submission, we were going through the process. We just recently received the rejection from council. As of last week, we have forwarded our appeal to that decision. We are now going to go through that process.

CHAIR - How long is that likely to take, Damien?

Mr DRY - Our hope is a couple of weeks.

Mr ROSS - I will just clarify: in two weeks we have a directions hearing, at which time all parties will come together. I think it can take up to three months from the date of our appeal to hear the appeal and resolve the situation.

CHAIR - Does that not affect the critical path? Is that not a critical path issue for this project?

Mr ROSS - Yes, it does. I think it is noted down that the development application is part of the critical path.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr VALENTINE - The development application was knocked back by council. Why was it knocked back? Can you give us an understanding of what was objected to?

Mr ROSS - The grounds are in the notes, but, as I said, we've -

CHAIR - They do not have page numbers. It is 3.8.

Mr ROSS - That is their grounds of appeal. I guess in the appeal we are trying to make clear that we appeal against those grounds.

Mr VALENTINE - It is the break in the flexible barrier?

Mr SHELTON - Along those lines - this is where ex-mayors come into play - the planning officer recommended it for approval, but the council actually overrode the planning directive and voted against it.

Mr ROSS - That's correct.

CHAIR - Do we have other questions?

Mr VALENTINE - I suppose one observation. With respect to the flooding that occurs around Woodbury, what is your understanding of how high the floodwaters come today in relation to the surface of the road? Do they go over the road at that point or do they not reach the top of the road?

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Mr ELLIOTT - Based on evidence we have seen, floodwaters did not reach the top of the road. However, if there is a more significant storm event, that may be the case.

Mr VALENTINE - Do you know how close it came?

Mr ELLIOTT - I do not have those details on me.

Mr VALENTINE - In one of the submission made, it shows the barriers with floodwaters around it, but at that time you don't think it would have got over it?

Mr ELLIOTT - It didn't appear to in the evidence we were given.

Mr VALENTINE - The road height is going to be another -

Mr ELLIOTT - It is increasing - again I do not have the exact details - but -

Mr VALENTINE - Is it 250 mm or something like that?

Mr ELLIOTT - If there is, because of the nature of the way you need to do overlays for paper designs, but, yes, it is a couple of hundred millimetres.

Mr VALENTINE - Thank you.

CHAIR - I make it clear to everyone here that the officers of the department and the contractors have not seen the submissions before the committee at this stage. We have seen it; they will be given submissions as they leave the table. Everyone should be clear on that. If I could ask you to withdraw from the table so we can swear in other witnesses. Thank you very much.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

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Mr ALLEN COOPER, OWNER, WOODBURY HOUSE, **Mr GAVIN NICHOLAS**, BROOKLANDS PTY LTD, **Mr MARK CORNELIUS**, OWNER, WOODBURY HILL, AND **Mr CHRISTOPER MERRIDEW** WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

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Messrs CORNELIUS, MERRIDEW, COOPER & NICHOLAS - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you. It is usual that witnesses offer an opening statement. I do not know whether you would like to go in a particular order, but I am happy to start anywhere.

Mr MERRIDEW - May I ask a question? There was a lot of debate about the growth in the Woodbury House area. At some stage I would like to ask Damien, if appropriate, a more detailed explanation of access to St Peters Pass - the avenue of trees - if that is appropriate in your processes?

CHAIR - The question then comes to the committee. You do not get the opportunity in the formal committee to question the witnesses. We can ask the witnesses to come back to the table to respond to questions raised before the committee. That is the process that happens.

Mr MERRIDEW - That is an option for your committee?

CHAIR - Yes.

Mr MERRIDEW - Thank you.

Mr NICHOLAS - Our main concern is getting our machinery and so forth into Woodbury House. We have land on either side. We go down the highway and at the moment we go in one entrance of Woodbury House, and we have a big gate there that we use. If the proposed wire road goes down either side, we cannot get wide gear into Woodbury House over the ramp. We have a lot of stock trucks that go in there. At the moment they swing out to get in straight. They will not be able to get over the wire barriers to get in, so they'll obviously knock the ramp down if they can't get out and swing in.

We thought that if we could get a turn further up from Allen's because at the moment with a machine we go down the old lane road. You know where the old highway is? That is our

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land over there, on the other side of the railway line. We go down there to the Woodbury turnoff and I turn there - which I've only got about a kilometre coming up the highway - we come out Sorell Springs Road now. That's where the wire rope goes in, and once you come down, on the way down, on the highway with our machines -

Mr VALENTINE - How wide?

Mr NICHOLAS - Well, it varies. The gear is individual all the time, isn't it? Just for safety reasons we go down the old highway and turn - we've only got a kilometre to come back up - and that saves going on the highway all the time.

If a wire rope goes in and we haven't got a hole to pop in, it is no good going down the whole road because we have to come right the way back to Sorell Springs turnoff, which we would come out anyway so we are on the road. If the wire rope goes on the edge of the road, we cannot get into Woodbury House because the gap is not big enough. What we propose is to come up on the lucerne paddock there, and they could put a G-turn in because there is plenty of room even if you have to take a little bit of our paddock, because this is going to affect us for another 50 years - well, not me, but my sons.

Mr LLEWELLYN - This is up towards the corner?

Mr NICHOLAS - Yes, about 200 or 300 metres up from Allen's turnoff. We could put a big gate in there and go down the old highway and cut across the highway there. I have been to Hobart a fair few times lately, taking a fair bit of notice, and they seem to have spent a fair bit of money down there at Redside, to me, to provide access. We thought there would be enough room even if they took a couple of metres off our lucerne paddock to make a turn so we can pop in and get a big gate to get our machinery in. That is the main reason I am here. We can go to the Woodbury Road, come south for about a kilometre and go in -

Mr LLEWELLYN - That would be clearly near where sometimes we have signs up.

Mr NICHOLAS - That's it. Over there somewhere; about there.

CHAIR - I am just clarifying that State Growth is taking note of these questions so that they can answer them in their opportunity to respond.

Mr NICHOLAS - Jon's been out home quite a bit. We have spoken over the kitchen table, haven't we?

Mr ELLIOTT - We certainly have.

Mr NICHOLAS - He sort of knows where we are situated. They said that's what we're are doing. I got a letter and I thought we might as well come in and do a bit more complaining - we might get somewhere. If you say nothing, they'll just bung them in and that's it.

Laughter.

Mr NICHOLAS - We figured, with a bit of common sense, we could come to some compromise. I reckon, anyway.

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CHAIR - Thank you, Mr Nicholas. Is that your main concern? There are no other concerns for the project or questions with the project?

Mr NICHOLAS - No, not off the top of my head. That is the main thing. Well, we've got to get in and we've got a big gate there now that we've cut a hole in the fence so we can get in, because our machinery - well, we're down to sort of that - Allen's ramp - we don't want to knock it down otherwise he won't talk to me.

Mr LLEWELLYN - From Allen's point of view you would create another better access also?

Mr NICHOLAS - Yes, to go down. As you say, where those signs are, somewhere there near the parliamentary election signs.

Laughter.

Mr VALENTINE - He was talking about parliamentary election signs, not road signs.

Mr NICHOLAS - Up there, from between the road and the railway line, there's - well, I could measure it; but it's probably 50 metres up there from the edge of the road and across to the railway. Put one of those G-turns in and - as I've said to John, they've got one up for Daryl Hazelwood, a good k up the road, and then when he goes into his woolshed. We have sort of four or five people going in to Woodbury House fairly frequently. I'm up and down there all the time, working

CHAIR - Okay. I would like to keep that on notice as we have lots to get through. Have you asked all your questions?

Mr NICHOLAS - I think so, yes.

CHAIR - Mr Cooper, would you like to make an opening statement?

Mr COOPER - I am Allen Cooper, and this is my wife, Linda. We own Woodbury House. We are heritage consultants, specialist builders in heritage conservation and the first heritage group in Queensland. We undertook Queensland's first heritage survey of a city. We have been doing heritage conservation works in England and Australia; for over 55 years, we've been in business. We purchased Woodbury House because it was a derelict building, circa 1823 - very important to the country - with the intention of restoring it, but one does not put \$2 million into something if you cannot get something in return. It has to pay for itself, obviously, because no-one is that philanthropic unless your name's Twiggy Forrest.

That's my opening statement. I'd like actually to take up what Gavin was talking about whilst he mentioned the entry and speak on the entry. The entry situation for Woodbury is not like it is for most other houses or most other farms, because there's three separate business concerns that share that one entry, plus there's two residential addresses that share that one entry. It is not a standard entry that comes into a farm or anywhere. It's more like a small road that services a small estate because of the amount of people, the different usages, that that has. The usage that has, of course, with regards to Gavin and what Mr Cornelius will talk about later - with their business, which is in primary production - which is Gavin, of course, and forestry, which is Mr Cornelius, they do have large machinery. When we put that entry in, it

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was placed in there as the safest area on the Midland Highway to put an entry. It was plotted by DIER, or the State Growth; it was plotted by them. I had to fly down from Queensland and walk the road to say where that was going to be placed. It took us nearly four years to get the entry and they said it was the best entry on the highway, no problem. It has to be made wider, all the rest of it - so we put that in there.

But nowadays, as Gavin alluded to, the machinery is getting wider, much bigger - all the machinery is getting bigger and bigger, and it cannot fit through a standard gate. So what we've had to do with Gavin is take a section of fence out and then that allows them, when they've got this wide machinery, to bring that machinery through a fence.

Now with the rationale of the road upgrade, that's not allowable, because all unlicensed entries must be closed, of course. Because that's a hole in the wire fence, that's not available to these guys to use for the normal production of their business. So, of course, it is important that they get their machinery in to service their properties. It's also important to me that I don't lose my entry if they want to knock it down.

Therein lies the conundrum. We, of course, with our business plan, we're tapping into tourism - 1.2 million visitors a year to this state, and that's where a lot of prospective money is to come from. So we're already tied in with other tourism ventures in the state, and we need people to be able to enter and exit our property.

That 4.1 kilometres - I do know that State Growth has said has said 2.9 kilometres to Antill Ponds. If I can refer you to my submission on page 17, I've actually shown the Antill Ponds intersection. From that you can see, that it is a turnaround P-junction, which services traffic travelling north. Traffic travelling north can do a U-turn to travel back south.

A member - Sorry, what page was that?

Mr COOPER - Page 17. My objection to that one is that travelling south, which is us to get back home, no provision has been made for us to do a P-turn or a U-turn. We would have to drive into there, either try to do an illegal turn within the entry of traffic coming from the north to do the U-turn or perhaps drive down the old highway, across an ungated railway line to try to find where to turn round in the railway yards. So that is not a U-turn for us to use. So 2.9 kilometres they say for light vehicles but there is no provision made for it. I think you can see that on that page quite clearly.

We do have to travel 4.1 kilometres to do a turn past our business. Now that means going past our gate to Sorell Springs Road, turn left onto Sorell Springs Road, and then we have to go over a railway line, down Sorell Springs Road, to the next paddock, to do a U-turn in that paddock. The U-turn is not even a U-turn bay on the highway - it's off the highway. So that's a large distance. Now if we've got people who are travelling, who want to come and stay at one of our cottages or want to visit my wife's antique business that she is proposing, they are not going to drive and say, 'Oh, look at that', see the sign and go 4.2 kilometres past it, to do a U-turn to come 4.2 kilometres back - they're going to carry on somewhere else. So that's going to affect our business. So whilst we're talking about entries, the entry in and off that highway for us is very, very important, obviously.

The other thing with the highway is that we have tried to negotiate with State Growth about putting entries into positions. I've noticed all up and down the highway, as Gavin alluded to -

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I mean, Redsides - some \$400 000 has been put into Redsides. That's quite a bit of money, to put that turnaround bay opposite Redsides. I flagged Redsides to State Growth when I very first saw it, when this came up last year, and was told it was temporary. But of course until a turnaround could be found for the owner close to his thing, but he only had to go 2 kilometres. Only - it's still a long way; it's still too far - 2 kilometres is still too far to go. He had to go 2 kilometres one way, and the 2 kilometres back the other way before he could make the turn. But now there's a turn right opposite his entry, which cost an absolute fortune. There's a shearing shed at Gavin's - I mean, I've got hundreds of these examples all up and down the highway. I've photographed them and measured them from Launceston to Hobart. The shearing shed - there's an entry pretty wide for a shearing shed. I mean, you know - it's a shearing shed.

We've got three businesses and we cannot get an entry, so I've asked, 'Okay, can we start the highway just south of our entry?' That way you might lose 300, 400 metres of 'the dual highway, because the highway is not actually starting right on the bend; it's starting off the bend. I said, 'In over 200 kilometres, surely that's not a great deal? As soon as you're flattening out the bend south of Woodbury, that extra 300, 400 metres could be made up there. That would afford us the status quo', and the answer was, 'No, it is interfering with our rationale for what our highway is meant to be.'

I asked whether we could put an entry where our trees are. We don't make the [inaudible] CSIRO see if we can grow trees. It's a rural tree decline area where we are - just where that is, you know, because it is too close to the bend. Yet a lot of those entries they are proposing - Antill Ponds and that - are no further away from the bend than what that actually would have been.

We also then suggested that - this is what Gavin was saying - just south of our existing entry, there is a big kink in the highway. It does not really show up on the plan, because the plan does not show the whole stretch in one length. If you went out to sight the place, you can see that kink in the highway quite plainly. Gavin doesn't mind losing that couple of metres off his land to straighten that up. If that is straightened up there, you can turn right here or turn right there, or they could put us a turn on the other side where the railway is.

Whether they put a turn right lane to come in and out, or they put the U-turn bay opposite, there's plenty of room there with the highway - between the ramp, the highway and us. You could get six lanes in. There is not a problem there, but the only answer I got from them verbally, unfortunately, but, as we are under oath, it's the truth - was, 'Well, we're not putting access across two lanes', but if you drive from Hobart to Launceston, I can show you many accesses across two lanes in the finished roadworks.

There is no continuity at all between what is happening at different places along the highway. There is not one national plan or one state plan. It seems to be each bit is ad hoc and ad libbed and going by different rules. I do not believe that is learning as we go along, not when you have the consultants that are doing these projects.

I believe we've been completely and utterly not treated correctly with the highway. It will not set a precedent. I do not think you will find another highway that has got another entrance to a farm that has three businesses and two residences. It is not setting precedents, but precedents have been set with the likes of Redsides and the shearing shed. There is plenty of ones we can site.

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With regard to Mr Nicholas having to come from Sorell Springs Road with his farm machinery - we're talking about bicycles, we are talking about a truck being 2.4 metres wide. That is nothing. Some of the farm machines - my gate is 4.2 metres wide and they cannot get a machine through that gate. You have a 4.2-wide machine-plus coming 4.1 kilometres down the highway governed by wire rope, doing 15 kilometres an hour, you have no room for a cyclist. You have no room for nothing, and then you have to try and get into the entry. It is not - if this is a safety upgrade, where is the safety in that? There is no safety.

We have to look at all these things. You cannot apply a standard rule to every area because we are all different. We have different prerequisites. Our prerequisite is to get these machines in. If you are in the city, your prerequisite is, yes, a 2.4 metre-wide truck, but we are not in the city - we are a farming area in the midlands. We do not have 2.4 metre-wide machinery, we have 4 metres-plus wide machinery. It is a different set of values. With the entry -

CHAIR - Could you move onto the next point, please?

Mr COOPER - Sorry, yes, I will. Loss of cultural heritage. We are concerned about the cultural heritage, obviously, as heritage consultants - what Woodbury is and what Woodbury was. The property has been compromised. It was compromised when the new road went through in the 1970s, because that road went through sections of the front of the yard that it should never have gone through and would not go through today, had we had the rules we have now. Because one bad thing was done 40 years ago when there were no controls over it, it does not mean another thing should happen now when we have these controls and we are more enlightened and we know more. We do not compound an issue twice that has been done.

The front of Woodbury House is very important - how it sits in its environment; what it says about its environment; what the whole highway says - it's the Midland Heritage Highway - and we want to remove 'highway'; the trees, the flowering hawthorns - everything is an integral part of what Tasmania is.

It is what the Midland Highway is - it is not a super highway. It is not the Gold Coast Highway. We have to take these things onboard. The streetscape - at the moment we have some sucker growth, which State Growth has said today are going to be left or may be left.

We had a big talk about not losing trees, although they're suckers. How old does a sucker have to be before it's a tree? Woodbury House, 1823 - suckers from the original trees in 1823 would be a 100-year old, 120-year old, 150-year old. When does it become a tree when it's not a sucker growth? The thing is, the streetscape appeal of Woodbury House is looking through that greenery with the house behind. That is what it was; that is what it always was. That is what it was in the 1920s. That is what it was when the road went through, and that is what it should be now.

The proposal was to remove all of my sucker growth and also the elms, the large elms that are at the old entry - the only defining fact, the only footprint of the original entry. They were proposed to be moved as well. We will not have anything. There has been a lot of consultation -

Mr LLEWELLYN - But that is not happening now?

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Mr COOPER - It is happening. I dispute that, because I have got emails and verbal confirmation that 'Yes, whilst we are building the highway, we may be able to leave'. I said to them, 'Lay the hedges.' They said it would be right to my fence, because they are not coming onto our land - because this goes back prior to Jonathon or Damien - this goes back to when the heritage days before the start. I said, 'Look, there should not be any more encroachment upon Woodbury House.' They said, 'That is fine', and they have pushed everything along.

The trees - I asked if he could lay them and leave a metre of land, 750 to a metre of land, outside my fence so that I can lay a hedge, which I believe has been done at Langley's, up in the north. You can see that all these hedges are roped off. That is in the road reserve, where they've been roped off. They have not been touched. They have all been saved. I said, 'Well, can we save them?' - 'We will think about it. We do not know. We cannot give an answer.' But then after my objection went in, I got an answer, 'We might be able to save that one big one, but we have to have an arborist's report and make sure it is not unsafe and it is not going to fall down, so it might be able to be saved.'

We can roster constructing the highway - we can - it is in my submissions. The emails are in there. Whilst we are constructing the highway, we can leave the hedge to be laid, but when maintenance crews come through in the future, they might take it fence to fence. They give it, they take it away. One says, 'Yes, we can do it now, but when they come and do some maintenance next time, they might want to take it right back to the fence line.' So we've lost everything. There is no assurance that those are going to stay, even though they said they would. There is no assurance. There is no guarantee.

Really, the whole length of Woodbury House and these large elms - the sucker fruit growth - is important to Woodbury House in a heritage sense to what Woodbury House is. Woodbury House now cannot show how it was self-sufficient, how it supported a whole community of people. That is why the trees are very important. The -

CHAIR - Could you move onto your next point, please?

Mr COOPER - Yes, I am sorry. The flooding issues: we are very concerned about the flooding, very concerned. The distance between the house and the rail - the house and the road, the road and the rail is very tight. We do know that. There is no room to put a turning circle outside Woodbury House gate because the rail line is too close. If it was a 1 + 1 lane, then there is room, of course, but to put the extra lane in, there is not room.

Our major concerns with putting the extra lane in down around there is the flooding. The flood breached the road. The flood did breach the road; the photos are back. I know I sent lots of photos to State Growth showing the flooding which - some of those photos are in my submission here - but the flood - two floods back - it actually breached the road.

If you go back to roadworks, you will find documentary evidence of that. But -

A member - How long ago would that have been?

Mr COOPER - It would have been the 2011 or 2013 flood. My problem is that it is a huge catchment area, a massive catchment area. The water comes down at Currajong; it goes under the road, and then treks down to Tunbridge Creek and then you have all the waters coming off St Peters Pass as well. In flood events, it completely fills that channel between the

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railway line and the old road - so that's full up - where they've opened another lane. So that gets full of water. It gets full of water from the railway line across our property and into our property, which is evident from the photographs in my submission with water all through our buildings.

Our problem with it is that they are putting another culvert south of the property, but, you know, you can only fill a bucket once. If that water is full up, how can you put more water in? It doesn't matter if you put 10 culverts in if there's nowhere for that water to go. When they put that middle lane in, there is not many metres between the edge of the new lane and the railway line outside the house. There is not much room there, but there is one heck of a lot of water that has been taken up or that is not allowed to flow because of the inclusion of a new lane within that floodplain. My problem was that it is flooding, our buildings are flooding - [inaudible] it is going to compound the issue because the road and the rail has formed a dam.

The hydrologist's report that I read did not address what was happening with that. I know State Growth talk about runoff. I'm not talking about runoff on impervious surfaces - non-impervious surfaces - because the runoff's the runoff. I am talking about when it's flooding. If there is that much water, I cannot see where it is going to go and when the Southern Midlands Council actually refused the application, their refusal, according to town planning code - one of them was the storm management code, which said -

The proposal does not comply with the acceptable solutions of E7 7.1 as runoff will be increased.

... the council is concerned the current water will increase flooding on the Woodbury House property -

That was one, and the other one was to the entry, and the council said -

E6: The proposed access design does not meet with the performance criteria of E6 7.2 as ease of accessibility and recognition of all users has not been satisfied.

Council believe two accesses to Woodbury House properties should be maintained due to use by multiple landowners, including heavy vehicles by primary production users. It is also noted that designs are inconsistent with property owners along the left of the Midland Highway, which is not an equitable outcome.

CHAIR - Please move on.

Mr COOPER - Our flood issues are really important to us. We started to restore one of the buildings. Unfortunately the flood moved through that and again put that under compromise. We have held off works on those buildings until these issues are addressed.

Our other main problem of course is heavy machinery on the road, especially vibrate rollers and such like that, with our c1828 barracks - they're situated only 5, 6 metres from the boundary, so very close to the roadworks. They are in a very unsteady condition at present, but they are very important buildings. Harrison actually - Rob Harrison - the Barracks on the

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property, he loaned them to the government for use for their road workers. I have given reference to that interim report -

CHAIR - We have read that.

Mr COOPER - We are quite concerned about the potential damage that can be caused to that. With our expertise as heritage construction experts, we know there is going to be damage to those buildings. What I find interesting is the fact that we do not have any heritage-qualified architects or engineers suitably qualified for the assessment of these buildings. That is a huge problem to us.

Root damage is another problem to us with the machinery, to our trees, especially the ones that they are leaving the trees in the buildings. Root damage is a huge consideration for us, especially the mulberry tree in the front garden.

In summary, all we are after is some assurances and concrete proof that there is to be no further flooding, that can't be given. It can't be given. Also, of course, about our buildings and our access and not being detrimental to our business. Thank you.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. Mr Cornelius is next.

Mr CORNELIUS - I am a primary producer, apart from Gavin. I have a property that is not fully accessible by that road, but it is 5900 hectares so it is quite a substantial property in behind that area of continuous property. It is probably 90 per cent forestry. My submission is fairly short compared to the previous one.

CHAIR - Brevity is good, I can tell you.

Mr CORNELIUS - I do not know if you have read mine, but timber is my business. There has been a substantial plantation put up there in recent times, approaching 10 years old now; from years 15 to 20, it is going to be harvested. There is 350 hectares of plantation and all the roads are set up for that 350. All up, I've actually got 600 hectares of plantation there, which is a fairly big chunk - but 350 hectares of it is set up and comes down that road. The tonnage on an average figure is 250 tonne; there are accredited plantation foresters up there at harvest time and they make viable harvest. That is why I say it will be 15 to 20 years before it could be harvested. Two hundred and fifty tonnes a hectare and that comes up to a total for plantation wood that will need to come down that access - of 87 500 tonnes, give or take 10 000 tonnes or more.

There is also probably 700 hectares of hardwood forest, production forest there as well. That is treated different to the plantation stock. It is not clear-felled. So it would be a fair thing to say that in those 700 hectares, there could be 80 tonne of hectare harvest there. I wrote down a figure here - 700 hectares at 80 tonne, 56 000 tonnes. That is a substantial amount of truck movements. I had a harvest about 10 years ago when they cleared the land for the plantation and there was also some native forest done, and there was 30 000 tonnes coming down that road, more than that actually, it was probably 35 000 tonnes. There was guy, who is not here, and he is impacted as well -

Mr LLEWELLYN - So that is a thousand truck trips.

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Mr CORNELIUS - This is not one year; I do not want to earn that much money in one year.

Mr VALENTINE - Costs and earnings - that's another thing.

Mr CORNELIUS - Anyway, where this impacts me is - and also the smaller scale things as well -like fire wood. I haven't had any stock, but I probably will - I'm actually working on that at the moment when they come at a realistic price. Having to travel 4-plus kilometres extra down the road and back up, you get charged cents per kilometre per tonne, and it's anything from 14 to 17 cents a kilometre per tonne in today's prices right now. So, if you add those two, 87 000 tonnes and 56 000 tonnes, - and that's just on this production - it will probably be in the next 10 years. That's not 50 years - you were talking about generations. Trees keep on growing.

Woodbury Hill is actually in the buildings that you've got - especially that barracks - sure, there is a lot of trees that actually have been done with cross-cut saws and that. Convicts - the stone walls on my property were done by the convicts - when they were stockmen. There are numerous chimneys up there from when the bush men or stockmen used to go up there and run sheep up there.

I know that's not relevant, but I am just saying trees keep on growing - that is what I am trying to explain. If the trucks have got to travel over 8 kilometres, it will be 60 to 70 cents a tonne extra. To put that into perspective, the price of plantation wood chips is only \$14 a tonne. That is what I was quoted just recently. So I would be getting \$13.40. It is the harvest and the cart come in and then I get what's left of the market price. That is today's figures.

If you add up all those tonnes, that is how much it is going to cost me over a period if this break in the highway that we would like to have does not go ahead. My negotiations - yes, State Growth has consulted me. They have listened to my concerns. They said they were going to look into other options. I know they have tried a little bit. I think they get it slightly. They said it was not viable; basically they were just saying they were going to do what they want to do. That is why I have come here today - to explain it. So I am finished.

CHAIR - Very good. Thank you, Mr Cornelius. Mr Merridew, would you like to do your opening statement, please?

Mr MERRIDEW - Opening question, Madam Chair, I have not been able to find a map of the actual St Peters Pass Avenue of historic trees. All the debate today has been about the area to the north of St Peters Pass. Is there a map, or is it not part of today's agenda, the future of the St Peters Pass Avenue?

CHAIR - There are two projects that we are dealing with today. We are dealing with the -

Mr MERRIDEW - The north and the south.

CHAIR - Maybe your questions are relevant when we get onto the next section.

Mr MERRIDEW - I am happy to hold, if that suits you.

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CHAIR - That would suit us. I think it would be better just to deal with the questions to our witnesses around this issue and then hear the response from State Growth. Members, do we have questions, please? Mr Valentine?

Mr VALENTINE - Let me just do a little calculation here of cost.

CHAIR - Do we have questions for the witnesses, please?

Mr VALENTINE - Yes, I do. The maximum width of your vehicles, Mr Cornelius?

Mr CORNELIUS - I bought a dozer the other day; actually I have been on it today - that's why my hands are dirty. I was in the bush and I have come straight over here. The dozer is 4.4 metres wide; I had to bring that in the other day. That couldn't get in through the original, so we had to come in through Gavin's entrance.

Mr NICHOLAS - Yes, I noticed when you went in, holding the fence.

Mr CORNELIUS - Log trucks, well, there is hundreds and hundreds of potential log truck movements. The thing is with logging, it doesn't happen every day, but when it happens it happens.

Mr VALENTINE - I understand that, but they would be less than 4.4 metres?

Mr CORNELIUS - Well, it's the same as a prime mover - what did you say - they are 2.8 wide?

Mr VALENTINE - They are 2.4 metres.

Mr CORNELIUS - Yes. Well, they are still just a prime mover - they are no wider, but they are fairly long.

Mr LLEWELLYN - They take more to turn, so you need -

Mr VALENTINE - You have a bigger turning point.

Mr CORNELIUS - My road system is not set up for B-doubles, so it will be just smaller trucks.

Mr LLEWELLYN - With the B-doubles, you have at least 4000 log-truck trips at least. That is just one way. At least 4000 log-truck trip loads going out.

Mr CORNELIUS - Yes. If that's what you divide it in. Trucks are anything from 28 to 35 tonne, the size that can go into my place.

Mr LLEWELLYN - I used 35 tonne so it works out very roughly to be 4000 trucks out. Of course, you have to come back with another load of trucks, so that's 8000 trips.

CHAIR - What is the maturation of your plantations or the native forest? How are you going to harvest? Are you harvesting some every two years, five years, 10 years?

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Mr CORNELIUS - Five years from now, for the next five years, I would expect that whole plantation to be harvested and replanted.

CHAIR - Is that 148 -

Mr CORNELIUS - That is 87 500 tonnes in five years - five-to-10 year period. Not in the first five years, they're still growing at the moment, but five to 10 years. The native forest - well, I could harvest native forest right now if the market was good enough, which it isn't right at the moment for native forest.

CHAIR - Okay. You are planning to harvest that based on the price?

Mr CORNELIUS - Based on the price. It will be the same with the plantation, I might leave it longer if the price isn't good, but that gives you an idea of the volumes of the wood up there.

CHAIR - I am just trying to get a sense of the frequency that you are going to be using this road with trucks.

Mr SHELTON - You are not harvesting out of that area at the moment, are you?

Mr CORNELIUS - No.

Mr SHELTON - Given the issues of residue out of the south, most of it is turning to north, isn't it.

Mr CORNELIUS - Yes. I expect all my wood - I mean, the way things are looking, there is not going to be a plantation chip mill in the south of the state. It's definitely going to go to Bell Bay. There are two native forest woodchip mills up there at the moment. I think there's three plantation ones and they are probably there for the long haul. My wood will be going. It will be all right with the entrance, but it is going to be an extra 4 kilometres or 4.1 or whatever. They only charge one way, trucks on a cart; they do not charge both ways, so that is why I said it is going to be 4 kilometres times 15 cents or 17 cents.

Mr VALENTINE - So it's not eight?

Mr CORNELIUS - It is not eight, it is four.

CHAIR - Just for my education, An empty log truck coming in and turning - I presume it's coming from the north and it's going into Sorell Springs Road, does that need any bigger space or is that easier to turn? I presume that it's stacked up -

Mr CORNELIUS - They are not always stacked up; there's different types of - you might have seen empty log trucks sometimes - I do. You mightn't be interested in log trucks but some of them are not stacked up.

CHAIR - Okay. In your opinion, can they get around through the proposed -

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Mr CORNELIUS - To be honest, I have not looked at the details. I presume hopefully it's for heavy vehicles, so that's got to be, hopefully, for log trucks. I would be devastated if I found that a log truck couldn't turn around. I do not know how far they would have to go.

CHAIR - Any other questions?

Mr VALENTINE - This one is for Mr Cooper. The old entrance to Woodbury House - are you talking about the original entrance compared to the new entrance?

Mr COOPER - The old entrance.

Mr VALENTINE - The old entrance is further north?

Mr COOPER - The original entrance to Woodbury House is further north and it was an unsafe entry. You couldn't turn right at that - it wasn't very large. When we subdivided the block of land because it was the big farm which - when we subdivided the buildings off, which is what we were interested in, our entry was not to come through that gate. They said, 'You've got to find new entries', so you had to find a new entry. The only farmers who would give us an entry was 7.2 kilometres away at Tunbridge Tier Road through three farms and a poppy field, which was an horrendous cost to put a road in there. So we petitioned and it took us nearly four years to get that entry that we've got now, which is south of that. What I am saying now is that maybe we can put another one south of that one, which is what Gavin would do - it's whether we can get the turn straight in and straight out.

Mr VALENTINE - You seemed to raise concerns that the original entry would be taken out with this -

Mr COOPER - The tree, yes, exactly right.

Mr SHELTON - That is where your trees are.

Mr COOPER - That's where the elm trees are.

Mr VALENTINE - The elm tree is being saved, I believe.

Mr COOPER - Well, no. Only if they pass muster, and only one. They said only one large tree, not all the trees, just one - one only. It is not all the trees.

Mr VALENTINE - The elm trees aren't on your property?

Mr COOPER - No, they are right on the boundary, but they were located on the property until the road went through in the 70s. They are just outside the fence line. They are in the road reserve, they are in that first metre, but, as I said I can see that any that are far out where the table drain is going to go, they'll have to go. But the ones along the fence that form the hedge is what we would want to keep.

If I could just say something on the log trucks. I also mentioned that our neighbour has 110 hectares of the same plantation that Mr Cornelius has marked, put in at the same time, will be harvested at the same time, and that is another 110 hectares that has to come into that gate - they have no other entry. They came through our gate to plant; they came out of gate to remove

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the old growth that was there before they planted. There is an extra 110 hectares of renewable forest that will be harvested.

CHAIR - On similar time horizons?

Mr CORNELIUS - Yes, they went planted one year after mine. I did mention it - Mr Morrison owns it - I thought he might have put a submission in, but I do not know if he did. He is not here anyway.

Mr VALENTINE - That is another potential - ?

Mr CORNELIUS - He doesn't actually have a right of way down that road, but with the timber companies, there's usually a road toll to pay.

Mr VALENTINE - Okay, thank you.

Mr LLEWELLYN - You obviously have the road easement and you need to have a class 2 road to get on to your plantation obviously as well.

Mr CORNELIUS - With State Growth, I showed them on Google Earth my roads - it is clearly seen on Google Earth - it's very rough topography - rocky and steep. The hills up to my place are - especially where some of the roads are built - and there's no option to turn in other ways. I think if you did turn the other ways, I mean, I have got other roads where I could go, but my cart would be 20ks more.

Mr NICHOLAS - I was trying to get an entrance, a wide gate, to get in because our equipment just won't. Like I got a silo the other day, and that wouldn't fit over - or it fitted over Allen's ramp by that much. So we got to have an entrance - a big gate somewhere - just to get in. At the moment, with the proposed wire rope, I can't get in.

Mr VALENTINE - You can't swing out to make it out?

Mr NICHOLAS - Well, if the ramp's too narrow - like, I have contractors who come down -

Mr VALENTINE - You have to come straight on?

Mr NICHOLAS - It does not matter if it's straight on. I have contractors come in; they have got their big equipment - they are wider than -

Mr COOPER - They are wider than my gate.

Mr NICHOLAS - I just cannot get in. I can now because I have a big gate; I just cut a hole in the fence, just north of Allen's, but we are not allowed to have that entrance, just gates we can pop in and out. I have to get in and at the moment I can't. That's my biggest concern - I have to get in. If they put the G-turn in and the big gate up on that corner, then I'm right - straight ahead.

CHAIR - Thank you very much.

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Mr LLEWELLYN - With your property there and what we discussed - the catchment area, and the water that comes down that stream goes across the road and so on. Would it be possible to somehow divert that into your dam?

Mr NICHOLAS - No, it fills the dam first and overflows and goes through to the culverts that are on that sharp corner, where it's the worst corner on the highway. Plenty of times, I'm three wide there, and I've seen a couple of deaths there in my lifetime now, with the culverts and the water goes through the two of them. They are huge culverts and they just - well, they don't take all the water; the water diverts down through the lucerne paddock and builds up and then when you get a big flood, it just goes over the road, or nearly.

CHAIR - I will wind it up. As I advised you 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 comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you are repeating what you have just said to us. Do you understand that?

WITNESSES - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you very much and I would like to invite State Growth to the table, please.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

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Mr TED ROSS, PROJECT MANAGER, Mr DAMIEN DRY, PROJECT MANAGER, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH AND Mr JONATHON ELLIOTT, CONSULTANT PROJECT MANAGER, JACOBS PTY LTD, WERE RECALLED AND EXAMINED

CHAIR - Ted, Damien and Jonathon I would like a design of the plans so that we can have responses to each of the issues? I am sure members will want to ask some questions. You will have the right of reply, and then we can ask for the questions. Who would like to go first?

Mr ROSS - I have recorded some of the questions I have heard, but I'm happy to also receive some questions.

CHAIR - I am giving you the right of reply to these. Are there any questions you can address quickly?

Mr ROSS - Yes. The first one is around the size of the access.

CHAIR - This is at Woodbury House?

Mr ROSS - Yes. That is Woodbury House. The size of the access. It is what it is in terms of we went there today and saw the gap there. The highway is limited access, so the current access where the landowners have cut a hole in the fence for an access larger than what it is to allow the machinery in is not an authorised access. But they have the ability to vary that use, the Woodbury access, if that is increased to allow whatever vehicles they want -

CHAIR - But that's not a State Growth limitation whether there'll be private access? Is that what you're saying?

Mr ROSS - There is no limitation in place as to what the landowner does. Also happy to look at the sweep paths of the machinery, though. If, you know, we will review that in terms of ensuring that the vehicles when they are turning into the access are not forced to, for example, the concern for having to go out wider than, say, where our median barrier is, we want to make sure that our median barrier is not the limitation allowing vehicles to enter into the property.

CHAIR - Do you think you can achieve that?

Mr ROSS - Yes. That is no problem. The limitation on the highway is the actual width between -

CHAIR - On the bridge?

Mr ROSS - the stone pillar on the bridge, yes.

Mr LLEWELLYN - What about the issue, though, of moving 400 metres south and making the Woodbury access combined with the farmers' access at that point?

Mr ROSS - I think what I was hearing was that they were proposing that as you head further south from Woodbury access there is more width in the corridor between the road and the rail. The point we are making in regards to the allowance for a G-turn is not solely based

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on the width of the road between the road and the rail. We outlined a number of reasons why, in accordance with our strategy, we weren't providing a gap in the fence.

It is not purely just because we couldn't just fit a G-turn in. That's not the only reason why.

Mr LLEWELLYN - Can you tell us what the other reasons are?

CHAIR - What is the reason?

Mr ROSS - As well as the constraints on the property, we highlighted the fact there is the overtaking lane. Turning across two lanes of traffic - we want to put turning facilities in 1 + 1 areas. Our strategy is to locate turning facilities in 1 + 1 areas where you only have to travel over the one lane instead of having to travel over the two lanes. That is part of the strategy.

The second one is the requirement to provide the overtaking opportunity. Pushing this location further south actually gets you closer to where not only do we have the southern overtaking end, we also have the northern overtaking ending. You actually start getting closer to the transition between the two, which is even less, because when people get to the end of an overtaking lane, they are actually at their highest speed, so people in the overtaking lane will be travelling at significant speed. Again, it is related to the safety of the access.

That is why we are unable to provide it at this location. Also, as I said, the turning - the left-in, left-out we are providing in this section and in other areas of the highway - is what we have done in this strategy, and providing those regular overtaking opportunities. I do not mind addressing the accesses. For example, one of the accesses mentioned was Redside, where we provided a G-turn, like a low-use G-turn, for the property there.

CHAIR - Where is that?

Mr ROSS - - That is the near Lovely Banks, just on the other side of Spring Hill. In that situation we put a temporary break in the barrier whilst we were trying to work out where we could turn vehicles, because the nearest turning place for a large vehicle is actually on the other side of Spring Hill at Jericho, where you would be forcing large heavy vehicles to actually travel up over Spring Hill and then back. I think that is a distance of 7 or 8 kilometres, which is outside of our strategy. That is the different - there is a light vehicle turn at Tedworth Road junction, which is only able to be used by light vehicles only. The other one identified was Antill, which has been widened. The space we have provided at Antill is sufficient for light vehicles to do a turning movement and then to go back north.

CHAIR - It is not illegal?

Mr ROSS - - No. In fact, we will have a holding new line and a line there which will be for vehicles to prop there, ready to turn right. It is designed in terms of what we have provided as part of that access because not only is it a P-turn for people to turn, it is also the access into a road in there as well. We're also allowing vehicles that actually come out of that road to turn right as well. I guess the other point I wanted to make is the overtaking lane is a standard of 1.2 kilometres. That is part of our strategy. It provides a distance we're trying to keep consistent all the way down the highway. It also provides for the most efficient overtaking of vehicles. If we suddenly put in a 700 metre or varied the length of overtaking lane, motorists coming down wouldn't have the same opportunity to overtake and could actually be in a

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position where they think it's going to be a 1.2 kilometre overtaking facility and it's actually a lot shorter. It has been demonstrated that actually creates a lot of problems. We had some people come down from Queensland where they actually have some substandard overtaking lanes which they are actually going back and extending because of the problem with the length.

The suckers on DSG land - what we've had to do there around balancing the maintenance, the screening and storm water. We have worked with the landowner and tried to assure them that the design will show us keeping, I think, 750 millimetres of suckers which will allow us to have the benefits of actually providing the suckers along the fence line. In terms of the fence line, we're allowing 0.75 metres of those suckers, then we're removing the ones that actually impact on the drainage. We have tried to find the balance. That is where we came at - it's at 0.75 metres. That is what our design is showing and that is what we are planning on installing.

Similarly, with the retaining of the other trees in that area, we have worked very hard. We like trees; we do not want to take them out, but there is a balance of trying also to maintain the clear zone in terms of the traffic and also the managing of the flooding, which is a key issue that was also raised. Moving onto the flooding, the only thing I could -

CHAIR - In regard to the large elms at the old entry, are they on DSG land?

Mr ROSS - There is one right near; it is very close to the border. Yes, some of it is on the DSG side of the fence line.

CHAIR - DSG is not making any requirements on elms on the inside?

Mr ROSS - No. There is no acquisition through that section at all.

In terms of the flooding, there was discussion about the capacity between the road and the rail. The concern is that because we are installing the lane, we are narrowing the ability for that area. We are actually increasing the capacity of that by 20 per cent in terms of getting the water away - doing those things like clearing it out and concrete-lining that area will improve the ability by 20 per cent for the water to go away. It is again reducing the current risk.

Mr VALENTINE - Twenty per cent, but if you are taking 50 per cent of the volume of that area out, how does it increase? It increases by 20 per cent the capacity for water to get away, but the amount of water going into that space is going to be a lot more than the volume would have allowed in the past. Do you understand what I am trying to say here? You have two factors involved: let's say, two swimming pools' full of water, you are increasing by 20 per cent the capacity for it to flow out, but now you have -

Mr LLEWELLYN - That's right. On that point, I didn't realise until hearing these submissions that the water is coming out of Gavin's dam on both sides - once it fills and spills, it actually goes across the road and into that channel as well -

Mr VALENTINE - Reducing that by half, by 50 per cent - possibly.

Mr ROSS - I do not have all the details with me, but in terms of storage time, when you have a flood event, it might be the difference in that area filling up in five minutes or 10 minutes. As you were saying, the dam upstream is still going to fill up and overflow. What

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we have done in this project is increase the capacity for water to actually get away and that reduces the risk of flooding.

When you get a really significant flood event, we are not saying that we've designed this for every single flood event that could possibly happen there.

Mr VALENTINE - If the road was not there, it could just as easily be flooded naturally. That was before the 1970s. The root damage to the mulberry tree - have you any comment on that? There was a statement made about the mulberry tree's root system possibly being damaged.

Mr DRY - Certainly. Allen was talking about damage caused by the construction works. This is something we are quite regularly faced with doing works in close proximity to heritage structure and landscaping trees. We deal with this by including details of our specifications to the contractor to beware that these things are there. We also ensure that there's no vibratory rollers in close proximity to the heritage structures so that constant vibration to compact the road does not affect those or damage them.

Mr VALENTINE - You use multi tyre rollers instead?

Mr DRY - Yes, or just heavy rollers.

CHAIR - Did you address some multi tyre rollers?

Mr VALENTINE - Yes, I did.

Mr ROSS - We will be undertaking surveys of Woodbury House before and after construction and we have contractual obligations on our contractor to make sure that they do not do any damage. If by chance there is damage, they have to make good any damage. So we have all that in place.

Mr VALENTINE - A statement was made about the distance of an entry from a bend. A statement was made that you told them they could not put an entrance in north from their current access because it was too close to the bend in the north.

Mr ROSS - Yes, the impact. We said before that we looked extensively at a series of alternatives, including moving the access further north and further south. The curve that you have to the north has limitations in terms of your sight distance to vehicles and that's the concern there.

Mr VALENTINE - Okay. I do not know how I handle this question, but I guess what we have here is the significance of two commercial operations effectively not being able to access their land with significant-sized machinery unless an entrance is provided. How do you see that being overcome? I am talking about an entrance that is currently there, because they have an access through a fence which allows them to carry on with their work. Of course, it's not a certified access. I understand that creates an issue, but do you have any suggestions as to how 4.4-metre wide machinery can negotiate the properties they are needed to operate on?

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Mr ROSS - I guess it's the same with any property or business along the highway - if they need to upgrade their access to allow larger machinery, the department works with them in that regard.

Mr VALENTINE - Where would you put it? That is fine, but given all the restrictions we have been talking about - 2 + 1 and too close to a bend and too far away - where would you put an entrance like that which they could even work with you on?

Mr ROSS - I suggest they most likely select the location where the entrance currently is, and widen it to allow for -

Mr LLEWELLYN - Which leads to the next question - the need for impact. If we are to uphold the council's objection with regard to the development application. Based on Mr Cooper's concerns and concerns of other farmers, what happens?

Mr ROSS - This is a hypothetical question. All I can say is about the development application is that we are appealing it and we believe we have very strong grounds on which to appeal.

Mr SHELTON - A couple of points. The first one is on access. I will make this statement first. From my point of view, a safer highway from north to south is pretty important for all those people who actually go up and down and use the highway. Making it safer has its issues and we are dealing with these issues today - that is, access to properties, with some having more access than others and so on.

The issue in this case is access to Woodbury House. It has been indicated that the ropes could be moved back. As I understand it, they do not have to go right to be edge of the road. The obvious radius into the gateway is a concern when trying to swing out. If the ropes aren't in the road and the culvert was wider, that would be a better access.

As mentioned, individuals then have the responsibility of their own access. In this case the Government is creating a better highway and if this access is an issue, with contractors and so forth onsite, if it was agreeable by the owner, I would hope an arrangement could come together that this is solved as far as the width of the access. Then you come to the issue of travelling north and left-in, left-out - that is a separate one: safety versus individual access.

It is obvious to me that keeping the entrance where it currently is not adequate. As the department is putting the application in, it is therefore the developers and so it's an issue we have to deal with. If there can't be agreement, then there can't be agreement. I'm sure there should be some means of coming to an agreement. When we have briefings like this and people bring evidence to us, of course, we have to come to an agreement. From the department's point of view is there further opportunity to negotiate a process around that access?

Mr ROSS - When questions were being asked about this, the first thing I wrote down was around us going back and looking at the design of access and making sure that it was an appropriate size. I think the department can definitely work with the landowner around the size of the machinery and to make sure that they could access the property. I think that is very reasonable.

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Mr VALENTINE - So that means that the department might move the stone wall component further to the south to make it wide enough to accept any width machinery that needs to go through those gates, including the log trucks?

Mr ROSS - Yes.

CHAIR - My question is about farm machinery. It concerns me to have very slow-moving, very large machinery on a major highway, no matter how infrequently. Very large machinery is so dangerous; people do not slow down and comprehend the slowness of the speed. What size machinery requires a police escort either side or behind in this case?

Mr ROSS - There are various levels - I'm happy to take whether it's 3.8 metres, but it also varies. So there are certain size vehicles where you can do it yourself, under your own permit; then whether you have to do it under escort escalates, if you like, depending on the type of vehicle and how it increases in size.

CHAIR - From your understanding of the evidence we heard from Mr Nicholas, can you explain how, with this single lane, large machinery would enter and exit at the Woodbury entry from the south and then go up and turn around? I assume that it would have to turn north, go up to whatever that road is called up there and then turn and go all the way back down to the dual highway.

Mr ROSS - I do not think the government's so bureaucratic that we do not allow some common sense to prevail in terms of farmers. We fully understand they have to move the machinery up and down the highway and across the highway. We are not so rigid that we police that.

CHAIR - That is not my point. I am trying to get an understanding of how that will work. I understand there is common sense in terms of requiring a complete escort, but how are they going to get very big machinery in and how are they going to get it up and around and back out again?

Mr ROSS - The actual road is designed to take these large vehicles. As we said before, the minimum size of the width of the highway is 7 metres. When even a 3.8 metre vehicle travels along the highways, if there are no cars, it generally takes up the middle of the road, then it will pull off to the side if there are a number of vehicles in behind them. It is very much a common sense approach.

CHAIR - How can they turn when are they exiting Woodbury to return into Mr Nicholas's property? They have to go north, then they have to go down the road to the P-turn, do they?

Mr ROSS - Yes.

CHAIR - To turn around down there, then drive back and then cross the highway and turn south. Is that what you are proposing?

Mr ROSS - Yes. That is the case all the way down the highway with these vehicles, with all vehicles. We've largely provided left-in, left-out and vehicles are having to turn and go up to the next turning facility, turn around and go back down the other way.

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Mr VALENTINE - A 4.4 metre vehicle? That is what we are talking about?

Mr ROSS - Yes.

CHAIR - Will that be able go down that road?

Mr ROSS - Yes.

Mr SHELTON - I would just clarify that point. From the road south, which is where Mr Nicholas is coming out of, from Sorell Springs Road, it is single lane right through presently. Under the new design, there will actually be some other overtaking ones in that section?

Mr ROSS - Yes, there is one northbound overtaking lane midway between Sorell Springs Road and -

Mr SHELTON - So if there was wide equipment on the road travelling that way, which Mr Nicholas prefers not to at this point in time because it is single-lane all the way, there would be an overtaking lane or opportunity in that? If Mr Nicholas turned left out of the Woodbury House and back up to Glen Morey Road and took the old road back around, it would not interfere with the department, but that would be an avenue for him to stay off going south, to stay off the highway all together.

I didn't ask this question beforehand, but it's sort of a heritage question. Where the U-turn opportunity is on the northern end of it, what's that gravel road that goes out to the dam?

Mr ROSS - Old Tier Road.

Mr SHELTON - Old Tier Road. That is significantly off the highway. There was an issue, as I understand it, that it could not go close to the road because of the heritage roadside. I am wondering whether it is a possibility, because from my point of view, if a U-turn is right beside the road where people can see it, it's obvious and accessible.

If it's 300 metres off the road and there is just a sign there, I wonder how much inconvenience that would be. I don't know how important that heritage roadside is with the local owners of the area, but to overcome that issue, if it could be placed - and I do not know how you do that - in another spot, and that U-turn put in that corner, it would be a significant advantage for the road users. I am not suggesting for anybody else, but for road users, it would be a significant advantage. I do not know whether the department has followed that up or not.

Mr ROSS - I think the heritage constraints on us are significant at that location. That is our current position. I am happy to go back and have another discussion with the designers. I understand another issue with that location is that stock cross there, from one side to the other. It starts to complicate that area significantly if your stock crosses there to then go down into the stock underpass as well as having a G-turn. I think the current location is the safest location with the least impact on adjoining landowners.

Mr LLEWELLYN - Pursuing Mr Shelton's suggestion, and not wanting to alter the heritage aspect of the roadside, I am not sure whose property it is, now from that road back to Woodbury House, whether that is a significant property or not, but there may be a way - and it would involve conversations, I suppose, and so on - to have access to Woodbury House behind

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the heritage site and back down to where it is at the moment. That would avoid a fair bit of the concern that he has, but that would obviously involve going through a paddock which I think is irrigated.

CHAIR - Unless members have further questions, I would like to bring you to a conclusion. State Growth, have you finished your comments on those issues in regard to this project? We also need to do the York Plains - St Peters Pass this afternoon. Are members happy?

Mr VALENTINE - We have heard as much as we can.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. Could we now conclude that session and move onto York Plains to St Peters Pass?

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

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THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET AT OATLANDS COMMUNITY HALL, 1 GAY STREET, OATLANDS ON FRIDAY 2 JUNE 2017

MIDLAND HIGHWAY SAFETY UPGRADE - YORK PLAINS TO ST PETERS PASS

Mr TED ROSS, PROJECT DIRECTOR, Mr DAMIEN DRY, PROJECT MANAGER, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH WERE RECALLED AND EXAMINED AND Mr GREG McGUIRE, CONSULTANT PROJECT MANAGER, GHD PTY LTD WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mrs Rylah) - Would the department like to read the opening statement in regard to this project?

Mr McGUIRE - I will give a rundown on the scope of the project and the intent. This project connects directly to the south of the previous project the committee has just heard about. It has the same philosophy of increasing safety on the road and efficiency by implementing a 2 + 1 traffic lane scenario.

We will be introducing two southbound overtaking opportunities and one northbound. The works for the project will be predominantly undertaken on western side of the road to minimise impact on this historic heritage landscape as best we can and to improve constructability by keeping it on the single side. The geometry of the road is similar to the other sections undertaken on the Midland Highway. It incorporates a flexible wide road median - 2.1 metres wide down the centre, 2-metre shoulders and 3.5 metre lanes. Additional safety works include reduction of road site hazards, and provision of protection where we cannot remove them; improved alignment of junctions; and the provision of a heavy vehicle turning facility at the York Plains Road junction area. The project also includes three existing stock crossings used by the landowners that have been extended as part of the works.

That is about it as far as the scope of the project.

Mr VALENTINE - I tried to ask this before, but copped the wrong project. But for the record, I have a concern, not through a submission to this project but to another project about the plantings as we go north past St Peters Pass. Plantings on the right, topiaries, the heritage trees that are around that property called Kenmore Arms, and also on the left side.

Can you give us an understanding as to how many the heritage trees are being taken out, that are marked heritage, and what is happening to those plantings.

Mr McGUIRE - I will speak as far as my knowledge goes about the heritage aspects of vegetation and that side of things. Certainly, the extent of impact, I can speak openly on.

The works were considered very early in the project as a significant issue. It is an area that is well regarded not only in the local community but in the wider community itself. It is a landscape aspect that they'd like to keep retained and managed. That actually led to one of our decisions - to try to keep the works on one side of the road. As you've noted, we are doing the

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majority of our work predominately on the western side. The widening of the road is generally up to about 10 metres in width, so it takes out the vast majority of the hawthorn hedging, the larger poplars and a few of the avenue trees along the edge of the road - Pioneer Avenue - so there's a few.

Mr VALENTINE - When you say 'along the road', the vast majority of the hawthorns, are you talking about on both sides of the road?

Mr McGUIRE - No, on the western side only.

Mr VALENTINE - On the western side only?

Mr McGUIRE - Yes. The department has subsequently engaged a landscape architect to come up with a strategy for replanting to re-establish the Pioneer Avenue, to highlight the alignment of the old highway and also to reinstate the hawthorn hedge arrangement through the area opposite Kenmore. Now, obviously, at the completion of the works those trees will not be mature, but over time it is expected it will go some way to re-establishing the current landscape.

Mr VALENTINE - I notice some poplars in there - are they heritage or not?

Mr McGUIRE - No, again it's not my area of expertise but I understand from being involved in the process that those particular poplars are not heritage.

Mr VALENTINE - Even though they are probably 40 years old?

Mr McGUIRE - They have probably been there some time, yes. The other aspect of the poplars being in close proximity to road is that they are a safety concern as well. Of those particular poplars, already one or two have fallen over in storm conditions and caused not only safety incidents for the road itself but also for the people in and around the Kenmore facility. After speaking with the landowners, they are actually more than comfortable to see them - that's those poplars there - disappear as much as much from that safety perspective as anything else.

Mr SHELTON - Madam Chair, I declare an interest, as I said earlier today. As a farmer from the northern Midlands - Meander Valley area - hawthorns are marvellous in the right place and traditionally, in the old English-style farms set up around Westbury and out the back of Westbury, there are hawthorn hedges and so on. But where they are not maintained, they grow up and become a noxious weed - and you find that out if you get a thorn in you. The topiaries are out of hawthorns, of course; they are well maintained and I do not have an issue with those. Poplars - I have an issue with people declaring heritage trees that have been there only for 30 years. Yes, they are substantive trees, but they are not heritage.

The new highway going through there versus where the original old highway, where it swings out round behind the houses and so forth, there were significant trees in the gap between the new highway and the old one has traversed its way around. I hope that all those old trees which were planted for a reason within the landscaping plantings stay. I hope that the only trees, shrubs and bushes removed are those that needed to be removed in order to widen the road.

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Mr McGuire - Directly affected by the works - yes, that's correct. That's the intention.

Mr Dry - Further to that, we are working to infill some of those plantings where there are gaps in the roads in some instances, so just to continue the aesthetic of that Pioneer Avenue.

Mr Valentine - So this landscaping plan that you have will actually enhance the heritage style of the road for people to view from the highway as they travel?

Mr Dry - That is our intention.

Mr McGuire - Just as a secondary point to that, we've worked through the plan with the landowners themselves. The contract itself will contain conditions for the contractor to maintain the condition of the plants for two to three years, subsequent to that the landowners have agreed to take over the plantings and maintain them.

Mr Shelton - On another issue, stock underpasses and movement between one side of the road and the other. This is a substantial property which has property on either side of the road. I understand there is a stock underpass and a vehicle underpass on the northern end. Is there anything to facilitate stock movement down around the shearing shed? I actually tried to view that travelling up the road, but you can't slow down too much -

Mr McGuire - No, it's actually quite well hidden by those hawthorn hedges you don't like so much. There are actually two stock crossing facilities there. Not large enough for vehicles, but they run predominantly sheep through. One each side of the Kenmore building itself - so there's one about 200 metres south and another one about 500 metres north of the property.

Mr Valentine - Is it under the road?

Mr McGuire - It goes under the road, yes.

Mr Shelton - And they are adequate? There is no intention to upgrade those or anything? I mean considering this road has gone in and is supposedly going to be there for another 50, 80, 100 years. If there is going to be any upgrade, it needs to be done now and therefore thought of now.

Mr McGuire - Yes. Again, we have had those discussions with Kate and Neston Morrison, the landowners, and they are comfortable that those extensions are suitable for their stock movement purposes as regarding this section.

Mr Llewellyn - Just looking at this proposal, it seems to me - and it was acknowledged - that the new plantings that might happen, there is probably up to or in excess of about another 100 trees that will be inserted to preserve - ultimately, once they grow up and so on - the heritage aspects and the aesthetics of the western side of the road particularly.

Mr McGuire - Yes.

Mr Valentine - With respect to the width of the road: have you got as far east or south-east as you can to try to steer away from having to take out those hedges?

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Mr McGUIRE - Yes, I suppose one of the first - I suppose recognising the public sentiment towards the vegetation in the area. We actually ran a few different scenarios as to how we could minimise the impact. One of those was actually looking at only putting the wire rope in and still having one lane each way. That was one of our considerations, but even with that concession - and widening the shoulders for safety of cyclists et cetera - we would still be taking out the vast majority of the vegetation.

So we were very mindful of the concerns around that, but we found that compromising the additional lane et cetera was not really going to help us much at all, so we were better maintaining the safety outcomes, given that we were still having effectively a very similar impact on the vegetation.

Mr VALENTINE - Do you think cyclists will be able to negotiate through there under the new proposals with a reasonable degree of safety?

Mr McGUIRE - I think Ted's response earlier was appropriate in that the facility we are providing isn't a gold-plate cycling solution, but it is certainly a vast improvement on what is currently provided and probably in line with the cycling demand on that part of the road.

Mr ROSS - To add to that, I think through that section you will probably find that the current shoulder widths are probably only about 1 metre and you do not have a lot of sight distance. It is a perfect example, I think, of where we are going to be doubling the width for cyclists. Also by setting back some of that vegetation, you are going to have significantly improved forward sight distance.

Mr VALENTINE - So the distance from the road shoulder to the vegetation under the new proposal would be how far?

Mr ROSS - The new hawthorn hedge?

Mr McGUIRE - Yes. It's probably three or four metres. It depends a little bit on the earthworks associated with that -

Mr VALENTINE - So, it is not going to be a really wide open canopy once you've finished? At the moment they sort of come across -

Mr McGUIRE - No, I suppose directly after construction, it will initially feel quite open.

Mr VALENTINE - I understand that -

Mr McGUIRE - But within -

Mr VALENTINE - Fifteen -

Mr McGUIRE - Yes, I would say within five or 10 years particularly with the hawthorn. If it's well maintained, that'll grow reasonably quickly and divide.

CHAIR - I know that hawthorn grows really quickly.

Mr McGUIRE - I think, as I said, within that five-to-10 year period, you'll get that sense of avenue back a bit, yes.

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CHAIR - Any other questions? Thank you.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

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Mr CHRIS MERRIDEW, WAS RECALLED AND EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Mr Merridew, when you are ready we would be pleased to hear your opening statement.

Mr MERRIDEW - Thank you, Chair. Shall I present my original submission?

CHAIR - Please assume that your submission has been read so please go to your key points.

Mr MERRIDEW - In opening my key points, I have just 15 minutes ago seen these detailed diagrams of what is proposed for what I call the St Peters Pass Heritage Highway. I believe that commences at the St Peters Pass gates to the south on your right as you come down the hill, not long after you've left the dual carriageway system that currently heads towards Oatlands. I believe it finishes at the turning point to the rest and recovery centre, as it is called. That is the area that concerns me. Obviously it concerns the gentleman from GHD because he has gone to great length to point out exactly which trees will be taken out and what will put back.

Now there is talk of this two-lane, three-lane Midlands Highway development as being a major safety matter for the motorists travelling through central Tasmania. I have not heard any statistics as to what the accident rate is in the current area with the current two-lane road. There have been some bad head-ons to the north of this, and a very bad one many years ago at the Woodbury Plain corner.

I really wonder why we, the Tasmanian taxpayers, whoever, are thinking of spending all the money to make 1.3 kilometres of a most beautiful section of road in the southern half of Tasmania into a two lane for some of it - three lanes for some of it; it comes back to just two lanes when you have turn-ins to the rest centre. I really wonder what the advantage is for motorists on the Midlands Highway to go through to see this happen. Coming up this morning I noticed many sections of the highway - coming out of Bagdad heading up Spring Hill - are being brought down to one lane and a wire fence down the middle, for huge amounts of that road. So to leave 1.3 kilometres - 2 kilometres maximum - as a most enjoyable section of the whole Midlands Highway, which is pretty boring. Inattention is one of the hazards of driving on that road. Everybody just thinks what a wonderful break that is in the journey to see those trees, whether it is the hawthorn hedge in spring or the autumn we were seeing last week.

As you can see from the Google map national highway images I have circulated, there is enough room to squeeze the highway out both sides. Yes, you are going to go close to the stone wall on the left heading south, but then again, you go close to the stone walls when you go over the Richmond Bridge or the concrete abutments of the Tasman Bridge. Motorists are used to driving quite close to immovable objects. That would give space to put in a wire fence down the middle.

As to the wire fence on the left-hand side going north, we seem to be very worried that motorcyclists would run off the road into a soft ditch. We would prefer that they went off the road into a wire fence. That seems to be the engineering path. Quite seriously - if you talk to anybody who drives a motorcycle - and it is very scary. If you are going to slide along the ground, that is fine, but when you have those wire fences coming at you - never mind.

The intention is to put a wire fence down the middle of the existing two-lane road. I believe that is adequate for the amount of traffic that passes through there, even if you have to drop it down

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to 90 or 100 kilometres per hour to give an extra margin of safety. You have 80 kilometres now going through Cleveland, and I am not quite sure why, but you can do that on the Midlands Highway and it does not cause any tailbacks. It is an option for you to do for this road here.

I am sorry to be a bit strong about it, but so many people I have spoken to since your advertisement are totally up in arms, as no doubt you have had in your evidence, about the fact that this most beautiful avenue is to be completely wiped out on the left-hand side. Yes, you are going to put some trees back, but I would say that some of those trees have taken - well, they are World War I memorial trees. They are part of the Heritage Highway. They have taken more than 15 years to grow.

You talk about a widening of 10 metres to get an extra lane. You tell me a lane is 2.4 metres. What are you doing with the other 7.5 metres? Taking out trees and making provision for someone to ride a bicycle. It just seems such a major overkill where it is not a black spot on the highway; it is a beautiful spot on the highway, and I really believe that it is being done for very little benefit.

If it was a long uphill section where people did not like travelling behind caravans at 80 kilometres an hour, okay, maybe there is an argument for a second lane, but it is a very gentle grading in both directions. I heard some evidence this afternoon about re-establishing trees. Some of those trees, as I said, have taken 100 years. Poplars - maybe they are deemed as a weed, but if you talk to anybody in the Derwent Valley, they are one of the most beautiful sights in the Derwent Valley, the range of poplar trees. I will just have to check that, Madam Chair. I think those were the remaining points I had. The -

CHAIR - I would like to open it up for questions.

Mr MERRIDEW - Yes. Those are my main points. Thank you for your forbearance.

CHAIR - Members, do we have questions please?

Mr VALENTINE - I guess the Government is wanting to achieve this 2 + 1 business as opposed to putting in a four-lane highway. If they were to put a four-lane highway in, they would be taking out even more vegetation, I suppose, so your comment would be still: why is it needed for the volume of traffic? Is it the volume of traffic you are saying is not that big or constant to warrant a 2 + 1?

Mr MERRIDEW - Okay. The point I have been trying to make is that there is so much of this new highway, new fencing and new alignments, which is basically 1 + 1. There is miles of it, kilometres of it, between here and Hobart, all this 1 + 1. If it can work 1 + 1 for those 4 kilometres coming out of Bagdad going north, why can't it work for 1 + 1 for 1.3 kilometres - or 2 kilometres max if you go from the two absolute points - for retaining this particular section? I mean, it is a heritage highway. It is not a freeway expressway; it is a point of Tasmania's charm that we promote the heritage highway. If you bulldoze half that section out, well - it's taking out the Ross Bridge. These are the things that people come to enjoy. I do not really believe that 1.3 kilometres, even at 100 kilometres per hour, is going to be detrimental to the flow of the traffic on the highway. There are many points under the new highway - the new 2 + 1s - that are only one lane each way. Quite often it is because there was a cut-off point across that point.

Mr VALENTINE - Yes.

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CHAIR - Any other questions from members?

Mr LLEWELLYN - No, I think Mr Merridew has made his case very well. Apart from the fact that perhaps an alternative would be for a new highway somewhere to the right or left of this particular road if you are looking at a four-lane highway. Anyway, you've made the point with regard to this particular section, which is a beautiful piece of road.

Mr SHELTON - It is not my point to argue one way or the other. As a committee member we accept evidence from the department and the take submissions from the public to deal with this, but I travel that highway a lot. Even though it is only a small upgrade, if you happen to be behind a truck that's just pulled out of the rest area going south, there is no overtaking lane for the next 2.5 kilometres until you get up around St Peters Pass. Evidence tells me that people getting frustrated on a highway, which is our main arterial route between Launceston and Hobart, causes traffic accidents. I am here today as a committee member to hear the evidence.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, Mr Merridew. As I advised you 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 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 MERRIDEW - Yes, I do understand that.

CHAIR - I am saying that now because I will be asking you to leave the table and bring in State Growth and then get the contractors back to the table.

Mr MERRIDEW - Couldn't someone ask State Growth, of the 1.3 kilometres most of concern, how much of it is actually 2 + 1?

CHAIR - Yes, certainly. Thank you.

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Mr TED ROSS, PROJECT DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH, Mr DAMIEN DRY, PROJECT MANAGER, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH, AND Mr JONATHON ELLIOT, CONSULTANT PROJECT MANAGER, JACOBS PTY LTD WERE RECALLED AND EXAMINED

CHAIR - Could the State Growth come back to the table, please. Could you respond to each of the issues raised by Mr Merridew? That would be terrific.

Mr ROSS - I do not mind starting. My colleagues can add some additional points. The first point I would like to cover in regards to our approach down the highway is we are taking a 'safe systems' approach. The safe systems approach is about doing multiple things. It's not just about the wire rope down the middle - it is about providing the 2 metre shoulders; it's about protecting road users from hazards on the side of the road; it's about the audible edge lines; and it's about reducing driver frustration by installing the 2 + 1 overtaking lanes. All these approaches together help to improve the safety.

A big part of what wire rope use is aimed to do can be explained by the following: head-on crashes represent around 60 per cent of the fatalities on the highway; by putting wire rope down the centre of the highway, we are instantly removing the ability for that type of accident to happen. The Midlands Highway strategy is a safety program aimed at improving safety. As Greg mentioned before, we looked at the opportunity for the 1 + 1 through this section and that required widening that would remove the vegetation anyway.

If you go through there at the moment you have very minimal shoulders. You have probably 1 metre shoulders, 3.5 metre lanes and 1 metre shoulder on the other side - very minimal verges through this area. As soon as we add a 2.1 median in the centre, as soon as we add another metre to each shoulder, we are having to widen beyond where the vegetation currently sits. That is the argument around even if we provided the 1 + 1, it would still necessitate the move of the vegetation there.

In regards to hazards, my other point is we are protecting hazards - especially things like stone walls and such. We were talking about vehicles travelling at 110 kilometres per hour - if they hit any solid object, whether that is a tree or a brick wall, that will result in a fatality.

What we are trying to do for you is actually protect motorists from those hazards by again putting wire rope barriers in place, putting separation in terms of the 2 metre shoulder and so forth. Those are my main points.

Mr SHELTON - The answer to Mr Merridew's question, with respect to how much of the 2 + 1?

Mr McGUIRE - With the addition - the 10 metre figure?

Mr VALENTINE - Of the 1.3 kilometres, how much 2 + 1 is in that?

Mr McGUIRE - That is 2 + 1 through that section pretty much. What we have through this area is 2 + 1s from the southern extent through to York Plains junction, where it reduces back to single for the junction there. Then it is back to 2 + 1s for the remainder of the work so it is three lanes for the extent of the works except that that York Plains section.

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Mr SHELTON - So it's pretty much 100 per cent?

Mr McGUIRE - Effectively, yes. On the extent of area that we are disturbing, the 10-metre figure comes from the numbers Ted mentioned earlier - the widening of the median, the widening of the shoulders. This area is also subject to poor stormwater management at the moment. The side-drains on the road are very shallow even during what we would call moderate storm events. Up to five years there is some over-topping of the road for stormwater so we are actually doing quite a bit of stormwater upgrading, including additional culverts and things across the road, to assist in it. There is a bit more outside the road proper that needs a bit of disturbance.

Mr VALENTINE - So you are saying 2.1 metres in the middle of the road as opposed a white line? You are talking roughly 2 metres edgeways in the middle of the road?

Mr McGUIRE - A couple of metres associated with the shoulders and then some additional earthworks associated with drains and things outside of the road proper.

Mr VALENTINE - At the moment we have a metre of shoulder.

Mr McGUIRE - It's between 0.5 metres and 1 metre, so the widening's up to 2 to 3 metres for the shoulders.

Mr VALENTINE - It is 2 to 3 metres from both shoulders?

Mr McGUIRE - It adds up. The impact comes pretty much, as I said, to around 10 metres once you factor everything in.

Mr ROSS - So at the moment if you have 3.5 and 3.5, that's 7, and a meter shoulder on each side - 8, 9 - we're talking about adding another 4 metres of impact - at least 4 metres - plus the drainage, so it could be 4 to 6 metres of impact just to provide the 1 + 1 scenario. In this case we are adding another 3.5 metres to that.

Mr VALENTINE - If you touch that road, I suppose there are two options: you either maintain the road or you replace it. If you were to maintain that road - in other words, if you were putting a total resurfacing on that road - do you have to adhere to any standards under today's law that would make you put in a wider road?

Mr ROSS - The department - the 10-year strategy, is -

Mr VALENTINE - I understand the strategy. I am asking -

Mr ROSS - Within that we also have a category 1 guideline that talks about having a wire rope down the middle of the road for any national highway works, but if the department was not undertaking these major upgrades and was just doing re-surfacing project -

Mr VALENTINE - That's what I'm talking about.

Mr ROSS - Then that is all it would be; there wouldn't be any -

Mr VALENTINE - No stricture that makes it wider than what it is at the moment?

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Mr ROSS - That's right.

Mr VALENTINE - Thank you.

CHAIR - I have a question in regard to the development cost of this project. Could you explain why the development cost of this project is about three times that of the other project? Can you give me an understanding? It is \$1.07 million in development costs for this project - it is table three - versus the other projects. Can you explain that to me, please?

It was \$300 000 for the other project. It is table 3 and table 2 - table 3 in this submission and table 2 of the earlier.

Mr VALENTINE - It does not have the page number.

Mr ROSS - Just having a look at the two cost, some of that is just a translation of which phase they are in. If you look at the total for both the development and delivery phases, for the St Peters Pass project, you are over \$3 million; if you look at York Plains, it is about \$ 1.8 million. It is a matter of whether the costs were considered part of the development phase or the delivery phase. It is largely administrative - whether some types of the work were done in that development phase or some were done in the delivery phase. You need to look at the combined ones - that is, you have to look at the combined value of both the development and the delivery, looking at the total costs to design the works.

CHAIR - So it is \$1.8 million of a total of \$14.7 million versus \$3 million roughly of a \$24 million- or \$25 million-project. There is not a lot of difference, the ratio is around the same. Thank you very much. Do we have any other questions?

Mr SHELTON - It is part of the National Highway System. Because typically the majority of it is federally funded, any upgrades need, I would assume, need to meet certain standards in order to gain access to that.

Mr ROSS - There is certainly an expectation of level of safety and there's national guidelines around the geometry and the cross-section of the road and all these things. The expectation would be that all works on national highways are done to at least the minimum standards that are expected within those guides.

Mr SHELTON - When I was talking about this project with someone in the Midlands committed and commented that this project was costing a fair bit of money, they commented, 'Well, yes, but it is national money. There's national highways on the mainland and why shouldn't the Tasmanian motorist expect the same standard of road that they travel on the mainland? Just to balance it out, as a motorist, why should I have drive on inadequate roads in Tasmania because you want to expand and get more work done with the same amount of dollars?' That was his comment to me and I thought it was quite enlightening from a motorist's point of view.

CHAIR - Ted, are you going to answer that?

Mr ROSS - My only other point is that in a 110 kilometre an hour zone, it is expected that you have separated traffic. Largely that is the expectation, of not only the federal government but also motorists and everybody.

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Mr LLEWELYN - It begs the question: what are you going to do if we actually do need four lanes?

CHAIR - I can answer that question because we have had it many times. The AusRAP 3 standard fundamentally is an amount of traffic travelling on the road. We have to have a lot more people living and travelling the Midlands Highway to get up to a four-lane standard. At places where there is that volume of traffic - like Perth - that goes to four lanes.

Mr LLEWELYN - I know that argument, but as you know I did not put a time on it. I am saying what happens when you do need a four-lane highway. By that time, may they expect us to have hovercraft or something else, so we don't need four-lane highways.

Mr VALENTINE - With respect to the speed, if you look up at Cleveland, it is 80 kilometres an hour through that area. Is that going to be upgraded when it comes to the time, under the plan?

Mr ROSS - Under the current plan we have identified a number of projects. We also have a project which we call 'Filling the gaps', which is everything - Cleveland, Epping Forest and Campbell Town and other types of places - that does not fit within the projects we have actually committed to at this time.

Mr VALENTINE - Why not have a 90 kilometre an hour zone through this very special area? It is an area that seems to generate an amount of passion. Why not restrict the speed rather than give the full treatment - make it a full experience for the traveller rather than just a quick skirt through? I know policies are there; I understand that.

Mr ROSS - In summary, we have worked very hard with the local community and the professionals to enhance this section of road. The work we are doing, we want people who drive through this section to see beautiful pioneer trees and to see a hawthorn hedge and these beautiful landscapes. A considerable amount of resources of the project are going into making that happen.

Mr VALENTINE - I understand that, but some would say they would be travelling slower through it, they're going to appreciate it. It is a policy thing, I think. I do not know that it is something you should be expected to answer. I was just wondering why - 90 kilometres an hour through there gives people the opportunity to enjoy the experience without pulling out all the heritage plantings.

Mr ROSS - If we just point a sign limit of 90 through here, one of the issues is that I would not believe you would get compliance. So there's an expectation around the highway that people are travelling 110 kilometres an hour and therefore what we are trying to do through the works is to enable them to safely travel at that speed.

Mr VALENTINE - Thank you.

CHAIR - In conclusion, in regard to both projects that we have heard today, do you believe what you presented to us is fit for purpose?

Messrs ROSS and McGUIRE - Yes.

CHAIR - Do you believe they are value for money?

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Messrs ROSS and McGUIRE - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you very much. No other questions?

As I advised you 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 is not attached to comments you may make to anyone including the media even if you are just repeating what you have said to us. Do you understand that?

Messrs ROSS and McGUIRE - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you very much.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.