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**THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET IN
COMMITTEE ROOM 1, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON TUESDAY
30 AUGUST 2022**

TASMAN BRIDGE UPGRADES

Mr ADRIAN PAINE, DIRECTOR PROGRAMMING AND DELIVERY, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH, **Ms ROBYN HAWKINS**, PROJECT MANAGER, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH, AND **Mr LUKE MIDDLETON**, PROJECT CLIENT, LAND PLANNER, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Valentine) - Welcome to this Public Works Committee hearing and to the members of the public who are here today.

For the record, the members here today are Tania Rattray, John Tucker, myself Rob Valentine as Chair, Jen Butler, and secretary Scott Hennessy, and Estelle and Laura on Hansard.

We have an apology from Simon Wood, the member for Bass. He is a new appointment to the committee and was not able to be here today.

As a formal part of the process at all of our hearings, I need to impart some important information about committee proceedings that you need to be aware of.

This committee hearing is a proceeding in parliament. This means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege - 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's important to be aware that this protection is not accorded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside the confines of the parliamentary proceeding.

This is a public hearing, and it is being broadcast. Members of the public and journalists may be present, and this means your evidence may be reported.

Would you like to make an opening statement?

Ms HAWKINS - Good afternoon. Today we are seeking consideration of the Tasman Bridge Pathways Upgrade project, which is supported by a \$130 million commitment from the Australian and Tasmanian Governments as part of the Greater Hobart Traffic Solution.

The Tasman Bridge is a key link in the road network connecting the eastern and western shores of Hobart. The Tasman Bridge opened in 1965 to replace the original floating pontoon Hobart Bridge, and celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2015. This project will be the first major upgrade since it was repaired following the SS *Lake Illawarra* colliding with the bridge in

1975. The bridge has an overall length of 1.4 km, and overall width of 17.7 metres, with 15.85 metres between kerbs.

The Tasman Bridge Pathways Upgrades project is a complex project, not only in terms of structural design and construction considerations, but equally due to the unique nature of this urban project and the role the Tasman Bridge plays in our daily lives, whether this be as a commuter, service provision or as a vista we enjoy daily. The bridge provides the main traffic route between the eastern and western shores of Hobart, and has an annual average daily traffic volume in excess of 70 000 vehicles per day.

It currently has two narrow walkways on either side that accommodate a maintenance inspection gantry, bridge lighting and major services. The project aims to provide a 3.5 metre shared path on each side of the bridge, with improvements to the connections to the existing path network on the eastern and western sides of the bridge. Pathway railings on each side will adopt all safety measures, improvements to path lighting, upgrades to the bridge maintenance and inspection access, and bridge strengthening.

In addition, the lane use management upgrade is to be delivered concurrently, which is not included in the project costs presented today.

The project aims to ensure a safe, practical and aesthetically pleasing outcome, broad community and stakeholder support, minimum disruption to traffic during construction and minimum disruption to bridge usage by active transport during construction.

As part of the response to the coroner's report, Deaths From a Public Place, 28 November 2016, the Department of State Growth commenced investigations into the possibility of widening the existing shared path on both sides of the bridge and installing full-height public safety barriers. While investigations were progressed, a number of improvements have been implemented to improve the safety for all path users and these include: installation of cameras monitoring the pathways; phones connecting to crisis support services and signage; and where possible, existing services such as electrical boxes on the pathway have been relocated so that they sit flush with the barrier.

The project incorporates numerous positive outcomes and benefits to the community. The primary positive outcome is the creation of safe access for all on an iconic piece of infrastructure in Hobart.

Project benefits include: enhanced safety and security for pedestrians and cyclists using the bridge; improved access between upstream and downstream paths; easier access and exit for bridge maintenance contractors and emergency services during operation or in case of emergency or breakdown; enhanced connectivity between western and eastern shores; enhanced visual aesthetics on the bridge and from all vantage points across Hobart; and job creation during planning and construction.

As one of Hobart's key landmarks and an essential connector between the western and eastern shores and beyond, public and stakeholder participation and consultation is critical to the success of this project at all stages.

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The high profile and heavy usage of this critical core infrastructure means that consultation to date has focused primarily on providing clear communication of the project objectives and anticipated benefits to attract widespread support for the proposed upgrades.

All the feedback received from the community consultation engagement has been used to inform the design, development and delivery of the project. In terms of cost, the project is forecast to cost \$130 million at P50 level. The project's cost estimates to date have been prepared based on concept and options and analysis information.

Once delivered, the Tasman Bridge will provide a safe and usable connection for pedestrians and cyclists, giving people options to travel to and from the eastern and western shores for work, education and recreational activities.

Overall, we submit that the project is an important safety upgrade, with the provision of shared paths facilitating active travel as both an incentive to increased uptake of this mode as well as being a traffic congestion measure that at the same time provides improved barriers to address the safety concern.

We recognise the significance of stakeholder contribution and engagement for the success of the project and we will continue to engage with stakeholders to ensure key objectives of the project are delivered while being mindful of the available budget and the impact of the Tasman Bridge during construction and holding the aesthetic values of this iconic structure.

We are seeking legislative approvals as required. We believe that the costs are appropriate and in conclusion, this project is a good use of taxpayers' money.

CHAIR - Thank you. I will open up with one question and then I'll throw to the other members for questions that they may have.

You have mentioned the age of the bridge. There would be a lot of people in the community who may not understand what the life of the bridge is expected to be and whether spending \$130 million like this on providing extra amenity is money well-spent in terms of the actual structure itself and how long it's expected to survive.

Can you give us a bit of an idea as to the structure that these walkways are going to go on and what the expected lifespan is likely to be?

Ms HAWKINS - Certainly. In terms of the Tasman Bridge, part of the ongoing maintenance of the structure includes routine inspection and maintenance, as is required.

As I mentioned in the opening statement, the structure is an iconic piece of infrastructure in Hobart's transport network.

CHAIR - It certainly is. A lot of people rely on it every day.

Ms HAWKINS - Going into their design, bridges are typically designed for 100-year life, but in terms of them being decommissioned after that 100 years, that's not necessarily the case. That ongoing maintenance and inspection regime ensures that the structure remains serviceable and fit for purpose.

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CHAIR - Thank you, I think it's important to have that placed on the record, in terms of its lifespan. Members, do we have any questions that we'd like to throw to on the introduction side of things? Not in particular? Is there a long-term plan for bridge replacement at all, or is that something that's way out? You say 100 years, obviously that gives it until 2060-odd.

Ms HAWKINS - Not that I'm aware of.

CHAIR - There is nothing going on in that regard? The need for the bridge, and the height of the bridge, and the transiting of ships under it, it's not likely to become any less in the years to come. There are Nyrstar and the oil wharves and all those sorts of things. We're talking about a structure that really is very important to the people.

In relation to related projects, we dealt with some - well, was it February '21? - the on-road traveller information system and lane use management system, which are mentioned in this project documentation, can you give us a brief understanding as to where they're at? Given that they're in the documentation.

Ms HAWKINS - The on-road traveller information system - or the OTIS project - is intending to go on the market at the end of this year. In terms of their objectives and what that project will provide in supporting the Tasman Bridge, it will give people the information that they need to make informed decisions about the route that they take to Hobart, and vice versa. The LUMS project has been incorporated into the Tasman Bridge pathways upgrade project, in that it will be delivered concurrently, but the funding source for it is separate to this project.

CHAIR - So, it's not up for approval today, obviously, because we've dealt with it earlier?

Ms HAWKINS - It is worthwhile noting that it's going to be delivered concurrently.

CHAIR - Yes, it's good to get that clarified.

Ms BUTLER - It might be good for the record as well, Chair, if you can run through what that LUMS project looks like and how it complements this project.

CHAIR - The lane use management system (LUMS).

Ms HAWKINS - Certainly. The project is a lane use management system. Basically, it is updating the existing lane use management system on the bridge. It's quite an old, ageing system. The purpose of the project is to bring the system in line with current standards and to enable the traffic management on the bridge in terms of the contraflow lane switch to be undertaken more efficiently, and potentially use the system to manage incidents more efficiently. I think there are benefits from a bridge road-user point of view as well as from our maintenance personnel, in terms of the activities of the traffic switch. That project is currently in design.

CHAIR - If we can move over the page to project scope. I am interested in the barrier treatment that's going to take place. Obviously, there are wind considerations, lighting, all of those sorts of things. Can you describe for us what's actually going to happen to the present barrier? People would be interested to know that. What are they going to be replaced with, just so that it's very clear?

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Ms HAWKINS - Certainly. In terms of the current barriers, they will effectively be decommissioned as part of this project. Essentially, the current concept presented to the community has the new pathway sitting on the outside of the existing pathway which will essentially become a maintenance corridor and not be incorporated into the new pathway itself.

CHAIR - In short, the 3.5 metres is going to be a clear pathway with no intrusions into that?

Ms HAWKINS - That is correct. The safety railing that is on both sides of the bridge, that is designed and it will be of a height that ensures the safety of all users of the path.

Ms RATTRAY - Supplementary to that, can we have some understanding of why it is not suitable to be reused or continue to be part of the new design when you are going still have that existing very narrow one metre pathway.

Ms HAWKINS - Maybe as a good description of why that might not be the case, from our site inspection this morning you would have observed the height of the existing barrier. The height of the barrier that will be provided will be considerably higher than what is currently there.

CHAIR - It is on the inside? On the road side you are talking about?

Ms HAWKINS - On the outside. Just a guess in terms of being able to support that kind of height barrier, retro fitting of the existing barrier is not a cost-effective option to making sure the barrier meets all of the safety requirements.

CHAIR - A barrier on the inside, on the road side? Is that going to be significantly higher?

Ms HAWKINS - It will be higher than what is there currently. In terms of the barrier on the roadside you have the added advantage there will be additional separation from the road because of the existing pathway width that is there. With the roadside barrier, consideration also needs to be given to how activities like, potentially, emergency services might access that pathway if there happened to be an incident on that pathway. That has certainly been considered as the design has been progressed.

CHAIR - The overall width of that pathway will be wide enough for an emergency vehicle of some description. What sort of vehicle are we talking about?

Ms HAWKINS - I am not suggesting an emergency vehicle will drive on that pathway, I am suggesting it would be from the road they would access.

CHAIR - Yes, sorry, that is good to clarify that.

Ms HAWKINS - Where we have opportunities in the lane use management system to support emergency services.

CHAIR - Yes.

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Ms BUTLER - In the submission you have provided it talks about the coroner's report Deaths from A Public Place, dated 28 November 2016, acknowledging the sensitivity of that report - I do think it is important for the record - can you explain, very briefly and acknowledging the sensitivity of that information, the recommendations from that coroner's report in relation to the railings and how the recommendations have been incorporated into this project?

Ms HAWKINS - Sure, I guess just for the committee's awareness and in terms of opening to that question, the project in terms of our stakeholder engagement has been mindful in terms of how we manage the information we are providing to the community. We want to be sympathetic to people who might have been unfortunate to have had experience with incidents on the bridge. The coroner's recommendations were basically to provide barriers to a sufficient height that would prevent people from using the bridge. As an interim step, as I described in my opening address, the department has sought to remove any obstacles on the pathways where possible and in addition to, measures undertaken include the provision of cameras and the monitoring of the pathways, together with the phones that provide connection to crisis support services.

Ms BUTLER - Are you confident that the railings to be utilised in this project, based on other bridges such as the West Gate Bridge, are they similar to the scope and size and effectiveness of those used in other jurisdictions in Australia?

Ms HAWKINS - In the design development we are making sure the barriers are compliant with the relevant standards which consider the accessibility of the barrier itself. As a project team we are also looking at other projects that have been implemented, with the same objectives.

Ms BUTLER - I know we have put some measures into place, that report was from 2016 and this will not be completed until 2025, so, it has been quite a long process for us to get to where we are now. Was there any urgency in that coroner's report, or was it more of a recommendation in future say, for example, if you are looking at an upgrade this may be an effective tool. Was there some urgency required?

Ms HAWKINS - In terms of the project's delivery and the time frames there were probably a couple of factors in play with what was able to be implemented immediately, which the department has done. With the pathway's projects, there was having the ability to secure the money to be able to commit to building the pathways. In addition, going back to my opening statement and the information that is in the report, given the age of the bridge, this project is a complex project. Retro-fitting the pathways to the bridge has required a fair degree of investigation and design work that has already been done to make sure it was actually a feasible project.

Mr TUCKER - Chair, I will read this paragraph first of all:

The corridor's existing road infrastructure is at capacity at peak times, with limited alternative transport choices, congestion at the Tasman Bridge's eastern approach and the Mornington Interchange is resulting in extensive queuing and delays during peak periods. These traffic issues are expected to get worse in the future because of further significant residential growth in the outer Clarence areas and the Sorell municipality.

The reason I bring that up, with having a shared path on both sides of that bridge there is no room to expand that capacity on that bridge and this is something I would like you to talk more about. If we have a shared path on both sides and we do need to expand that bridge, what would happen?

Ms HAWKINS - The provision of the shared paths on both sides of the bridge and the funding we have for this project, it would require significantly more funds to provide an additional lane on the bridge. Also, in terms of the pathways, the actual loading that puts on the bridge is significantly less than that of putting an additional lane on the bridge. To provide an additional lane of that river crossing, there probably would have to be significant investigation undertaken to see if it was feasible, whether it would be adding to the existing structure, or whether we would have to look at other options. In relation to the question about building the shared paths and whether or not that prohibits the additional lanes, the current concept we have is a modular truss kind of arrangement that has been specifically looked at for the reasons of reducing impact on the actual road while building it. That modular arrangement potentially does give it some scope if there were some changes in the future.

Mr TUCKER - Yes.

Ms HAWKINS - On the congestion question, the on-road travel information system project that we mentioned - and certainly the lane use management system being more effective in managing peak time congestion, and incidents that may happen during that time - will help manage that congestion.

Mr TUCKER - Being a modular set-up, that would make it easier to pull down and move if we needed to expand that bridge further into the future?

Ms HAWKINS - Potentially, but I think on the question about the additional lane, there would have to be a fair bit more work looking at whether or not it was feasible.

Mr PAINE - One of the advantages of the proposal we've come up with is that there is the potential to have it 'hooked on', if you will, and therefore decoupled from the bridge, should there be a decision in future to put an extra lane on.

That flexibility and that option will be one of the requirements we will seek contractors to address in their submission to us, so it is certainly an issue we are considering.

Ms RATTRAY - Supplementary to the questions Mr Tucker asked about assisting with the Greater Hobart Traffic Solution, it's interesting that this project even met those Australian guidelines, when it actually does not do anything for helping the traffic, other than possibly take some people off the road and put them on a bike. Would that be fair to say?

Ms HAWKINS - Sorry, what do you mean?

Ms RATTRAY - With this 50 per cent funding under the Australian and Tasmanian Governments, as part of the Greater Hobart Traffic Solution, how does adding those two pathways to the bridge help at all with the traffic congestion? It doesn't, actually, does it?

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Mr PAINE - There are two parts to that. Encouraging active transport will remove some vehicles from the road. It is not necessarily going to make a huge difference, but it is a contributing factor to addressing congestion.

The other component is the bridge strengthening, which will allow for greater traffic loads and heavier vehicles and like - so, heavier trucks and greater utilisation of the highway as well.

Ms RATTRAY - Right, so there is a limit now as to what can go across the bridge?

Mr PAINE - There are some limits in terms of the mass of a vehicle that could safely go across.

Ms RATTRAY - Tri-drives are not able to go across?

Mr PAINE - I don't actually know which vehicles. We could certainly find out, but there are some constraints on what vehicles can travel across the bridge.

Ms HAWKINS - From our site visit this morning, you would have seen that just in terms of the actual volumes of pedestrians and cyclists that we currently see, the width of the path is a significant impediment to the use of the bridge.

Given that the bridge has an average traffic volume in excess of 70 000 vehicles a day, I think the proposed upgrades we are going to implement to the pathways will certainly attract a greater number of people than we currently see crossing the bridge - just because it is a safer, more usable pathway than they're currently using.

Ms RATTRAY - Through your community consultation process - and it has been quite significant - are there any projected numbers on how many more people might use the new shared pathway than currently do on those very narrow one metre pathways? You certainly do have to get yourself out of the way when you see someone else coming.

Ms HAWKINS - We have the numbers who currently use the pathway, and we have looked at the numbers who are using the Derwent River ferry as well. The department has done some work on the broader shared path network. We are still currently working on the projected benefits of the project.

Ms RATTRAY - So, really, it's difficult to be able to conclude that this project - and I'm not saying it's not worthy - will actually do a lot for the Greater Hobart transport solution. It may do a little bit, but it won't do a lot.

Ms HAWKINS - Usage is one benefit of the project. The safety aspect is also a significant benefit.

Ms RATTRAY - And the strengthening of the current bridge.

CHAIR - I suppose the fact that it's a part of a whole traffic issue adds a dimension that might, as the member says, make it hard to be conclusive as to how many people might use it - but in totality, the different measures that are made fit a bit like a jigsaw.

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Ms HAWKINS - Yes, and in terms of the cost of the network and in terms of options, it gives people the opportunity to choose.

CHAIR - It is an extra option - and the safety side of it, more particularly. Is that what you are saying?

Ms HAWKINS - Yes, absolutely.

CHAIR - Do we have any other questions on project scope? Options evaluation?

On the site, we talked about the options for one wide walkway versus two, and the other options that may have been considered. Can you go through some of that? I don't think we covered that today, apart from at the site visit.

Ms HAWKINS - Certainly. In terms of the two options that we've presented in our submission, the first option was essentially a widening of the existing walkway - but due to the nature of the walkway, effectively that would require it to be reconstructed. It's not just a matter of adding -

Ms RATTRAY - A bit on the side.

Ms HAWKINS - Yes. The second option - which we've talked about, and which is the preferred option - is essentially the truss or modular arrangement that will sit outside the existing walkway, on the extended head-stocks of the beam of the bridge.

The reason that was selected as a preferred option was considering its constructability - the opportunities for potentially doing a lot of the fabrication of those truss units off site, and trying to minimise the disruption to traffic.

In the design development of the cantilevered option - or extension of the existing walkway - it was considered that there would be a greater impact on the actual road, in terms of having to build it from the deck, rather than other opportunities to potentially lift it from the water. We looked at that, as well as the impact on the existing services on the bridge.

The existing pathways on either side of the bridge have a significant amount of services that run the length of the bridge, including to two reasonably-sized water mains, as well as electrical and telecommunications conduits that run across the bridge.

CHAIR - That are under the pathways at the moment?

Ms HAWKINS - They are under the pathways at the moment, so when maintenance activities are required on any of the service infrastructure that is located there, it essentially requires the pathway to be closed.

The preferred concept that the department has taken to the community would actually mean that, as I mentioned previously, that pathway remains usable from a maintenance and service point of view, without having to be impacted with the delivery of the pathways.

CHAIR - So, slinging it underneath, or putting it over the top?

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Ms HAWKINS - The option of providing a pathway underneath the bridge was quickly ruled out due to the impact on shipping traffic. We have limitations that we can't change - the height from the water through the navigable span.

Our current cost estimate provides for a pathway on both sides of the bridge. With that cost estimate, we have looked at constructability in terms of how that was put together.

Ms RATTRAY - As a supplementary, Chair, I did ask on site was there a plan B if both sides do not make the budgetary requirements? That would be useful.

Ms HAWKINS - From a project context we would look at the opportunities to potentially reduce scope for the project, but the other opportunity would be to potentially seek additional money from the Tasmanian and Australian Governments, depending on what sort of magnitude the cost might be.

Ms RATTRAY - The reduction in scope would from 3.5 to 3 metres, or just having it on one side, would that be the type of scope options you would look at?

Ms HAWKINS - With the path width, three and a half metres would ideally be what we would remain to. Descoping the project to provide only one pathway would be something we would have to consider down the track. At the moment, the commitment is to provide a pathway on each side of the bridge.

CHAIR - Cross that bridge when you come to it.

Ms RATTRAY - When you come to it.

CHAIR - Touché. Unless there are any questions on the project scope side of things, and the options evaluation, moving to project cost.

Ms RATTRAY - Thank you, Chair, I do have a question. In regard to this, obviously the cost is for the P50, and we always get the P90 option put in as well, which is not hugely over and above the P50, but it still comes in just under the allocated funding. I would like to take you to the financial year forecast milestone requirements, there is \$2 million, \$1 million from the Australian Government and \$1 million from the state Government contribution for the financial year 2026-27, and yet the project time line does not include 2026 -27. Can I have some indication of what that remaining \$2 million, is it painting, or the lights, what would that be looking at? I am hoping it is going to be all sturdy by 2025 if somebody is going to be walking on it.

Ms HAWKINS - Yes, certainly and that latter year commitment there would certainly be wrap-up components of the project.

Ms RATTRAY - For instance?

Ms HAWKINS - The construction would be practically complete in terms of the time frame we have nominated for completion, so potentially-

Ms RATTRAY - Late accounts?

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Ms HAWKINS - Professional services and tidy up, ancillary kind of activities, such as landscaping, all that kind of thing, potentially for connections. It is just an allowance for those forward years.

Ms RATTRAY - Thank you.

Mr TUCKER - On the P50, with the contingency and the escalation you are budgeting on about 10 per cent - or a bit less than 10 per cent, about 8 or 9 per cent - on those figures. A lot of the ones coming through to us now, 20 per cent, 30 per cent. I am pleased to see that it is down a little bit to what some of these other projects are, but do you think that is enough cover there? Especially with what Tania has just said with a plan B, you start adding another 10 per cent or 20 per cent onto the cost of this budget, you are talking up to a quite substantial amount of \$26 million.

Ms HAWKINS - The cost estimate we have provided today is based on the concept and options analysis information we have to date. The firming up of that estimate will continue as the project develops through design and once it starts to get into procurement. We do accept that in terms of the project we have to work within the budget we have at the moment and certainly our aim at the moment.

Ms RATTRAY - Apparently the price of steel is coming back, just slightly. I heard that only recently it started to pull back a little bit and that is good news for construction in the state.

CHAIR - With a lot of those others 20 per cent is usually buildings and things and it might be different with bridges perhaps, the escalations. I am not sure.

Ms RATTRAY - That is why we are not a -

CHAIR - Quantity surveyor.

Ms RATTRAY - That is it.

CHAIR - If you can describe for the public the P50 and P90 concept. I believe - and correct me if I am wrong, P90 is where 90 per cent of the estimates come within - not budget, what is it? P50 is 50 per cent of the estimates coming through.

Ms HAWKINS - Likely exceedance.

CHAIR - Yes. Likely exceedance. That is the term. I could not quite remember that. Could you explain what that is?

Ms HAWKINS - Yes. The estimation tool that the department uses in the professional services we engage are based on a probabilistic analysis of the estimate we are likely to use.

CHAIR - Hence the P?

Ms HAWKINS - Yes, that is right. P50 is basically the likelihood of the 50 per cent.

Ms RATTRAY - That is the Kingswood model. The Rolls Royce is the P90, isn't it?

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Ms HAWKINS - Yes. In terms of our projects that have Australian Government funding, we are required to provide an estimate to P50 and P90 level.

Mr TUCKER - P50 is the latest model.

CHAIR - Yes. Okay. The reason you do both, but it is interesting that the contingency is way up is double what the P50 is - on the P90.

Ms HAWKINS - The reason behind it is that it factors into the risk allocation as part of the project in the estimate.

CHAIR - Yes and yet the escalation is not that far off.

Ms HAWKINS - Their escalation figures for the estimate, with Australian Government funded projects, the escalation figures are provided by the Australian Government.

Ms RATTRAY - That is interesting.

CHAIR - I did not realise that.

Ms RATTRAY - No. I am thinking of another reference.

Mr PAINE - Yes, on that escalation, the Australian Government has their own consultancy they undertake each year and they set an escalation rate for every single jurisdiction across Australia. They advise us of the escalation that we need to use in their projects.

Ms RATTRAY - They may not have heard what was going on in Tasmania as yet.

Ms BUTLER - In relation to those costs, there would be ongoing maintenance costs for the Tasman Bridge and I suppose, it would be budgeted to the current bridge and what we use it for and its operational capacity. How much more significant will the ongoing costs be for the Tasman Bridge with the walkways and the additional paths on both sides? Is that going to be a significant ongoing cost?

Ms HAWKINS - On the maintenance aspect, a part of the scope of this project is actually looking at maintenance access and the maintenance inspection gantry because it is removed from the pathways. The benefits, we are hoping some of the maintenance and the inspection activities can be better accommodated by this project once it is complete. In terms of maintenance costs, that would be something we are still considering as part of the design and development, but we have been working closely with interdepartmental maintenance personnel and our maintenance contractor as we work through the design and certainly the options for that maintenance and inspection access.

CHAIR - To cover the balance of commitment. The department has the funding so far, except for \$4.1 million from state and \$4.1 million from the state Government, is that what you are saying, from Treasury?

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Ms HAWKINS - There has been a funding announcement for the project. We will need to go through the process of seeking formal approval from the Australian Government, which will need to be submitted.

CHAIR - So, what is the balance of commitment column? I do not understand -

Ms HAWKINS - In terms of the balance of commitment, that is the total amount of money that we have available at the moment and as we work through the design development, we will detail that up in relation to what the likely cash flow will need to be. We are leaving that as a balance at the moment, but it will be firmed up as we work it out, in terms of the project delivery.

Ms RATTRAY - But there is a 50 per cent commitment from the Australian Government for the project?

Ms HAWKINS - Yes, but we still need to go through a funding approval exercise.

Ms RATTRAY - And with the change in colour of the government from the recent federal election, that that still holds firm?

Ms HAWKINS - I believe so, yes.

Ms RATTRAY - Good.

Ms BUTLER - I want to ask one more question, it may sound like a silly question.

Ms RATTRAY - No question is a silly question, member.

CHAIR - Someone else wants to know the answer, most likely.

Ms BUTLER - You have the title, 'Financial Year Forecast Master Requirement' with one asterisk and next to 'balance of commitment', there are two asterisks. Can you explain what that means?

Ms HAWKINS - I think that might have been a typo from my end, so apologies for that.

Ms BUTLER - I thought it might have been something that I should know.

Ms HAWKINS - No.

CHAIR - Either that or it refers to Australian government contribution one, state government contribution, two. Who knows. No further questions on that page? Over to finance and procurement.

Ms RATTRAY - I did ask this question at an earlier time, because there is a reference in this about finance and procurement and it talks about, the project and the assessment also considered learnings from recent projects, such as the new Bridgewater Bridge. I am interested to know what are those learnings, have they come to fruition as yet?

We know it is still early days for that project, but that is certainly a significant project as well. Given that there will be two significant projects working together, effectively happening at the same time, how sure are you of having reasonable expressions for the tender process for this work?

Ms HAWKINS - In terms of its scope and scale, it is quite a significant project in the Tasmanian context. The learnings from the new Bridgewater Bridge project, as you mentioned, the project is in the early days, but for this project, the feedback from that project team and discussions with that project team were in relation to the procurement model that they used and associated learnings. That was the opportunity we had to gain from them.

Regarding the interest in the project, I believe there have been a number of approaches by contractors about the project. We believe that there certainly is interest in the market to undertake these works.

Ms RATTRAY - Given that they are very specialised and more than likely will need to be an out-of-Tasmania-based head contractor, would that be fair to say?

Ms HAWKINS - I think that would be a reasonable assumption. I would think to support that head contractor, they would pretty well utilise local contractors to support those activities, everything from the contractor activities through to the professional services as well to support the delivery of the project.

Ms RATTRAY - However, you anticipate that the steelworks that will be required to be off-site would more than likely be Tasmanian-based, they would not build them on the mainland and then bring them across and assemble it. Would that be a reasonable assumption or do I just have Tasmania in my heart and do not want to see it elsewhere?

Ms HAWKINS - I believe that that would be a reasonable assumption, but regarding where we are at with the project, we need to go to market and work through proposals that we are likely to receive. Based on additional costs associated with transport, it would probably mean that it would be more advantageous to undertake that work locally.

Ms RATTRAY - You would hope that it would be more advantageous?

Mr PAINE - Yes, and on that topic, there are a number of what we call 'tier one' - the major contractors on the mainland that are in regular contact with us to understand how the project is progressing and when it's likely to come to market. We do believe there is a lot of industry interest in this particular project because of the challenges and its iconic nature, it is something a contractor will be able to put on their flagship profile.

Ms RATTRAY - On their CV.

Mr PAINE - Exactly. In terms of whether the project is substantially concrete or steel or some other product, we can't be absolutely confident about that at the moment. I'm sure you're aware that there's a steel manufacturer in Tasmania that exports bridge beams to the mainland so there is definitely capability in that sort of area as well definitely in the concrete prefabrication space that benefit from this project, absolutely.

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Ms RATTRAY - There is a policy in place, I believe, for government projects that there is always a focus on Tasmanian-made, if possible.

Mr PAINE - Yes, there is a Tasmanian Industry Participation policy which makes up 25 per cent of our tenders as a mandatory component under our assessment. That is a significant part of our assessment.

Ms RATTRAY - Thank you for reminding me what the name of it was.

Ms BUTLER - As a supplementary, Chair, do you think that this project may be able to provide employment and training opportunities as far as apprenticeships and so forth? Could you run through some of those potential benefits for us, especially if both bridges are going at the same time?

Ms HAWKINS - As part of the requirements with the procurement of the project, there definitely is a training levy that is associated with projects when they go into, I guess, procurement. I would see that that would be definitely a possibility.

CHAIR - You might have dealt with this but I don't think you have in terms of the time line under (5) finance and procurement, the local government development applications, can you cover that when that's supposed to happen or is it not happening? I would have thought that on either side - and I think it mentions it doesn't it? - on either side, it doesn't have it in the time line, that's all.

Ms HAWKINS - Regarding our engagement with both Hobart City Council and Clarence City Council, they are very important key stakeholders on the project. We have commenced discussions with them on the project. In terms of the planning requirements, we consider the upgrades to the bridge relating to those requirements, potentially to be exempt but we're still working through that process. Certainly, we are looking at aspects of where the pathways join the land and how that impacts and what other requirements there may be. We are still working through that process but we have started engagement with both councils.

Ms RATTRAY - You might have to give them 50 per cent each.

CHAIR - Pardon?

Ms RATTRAY - You might have to give each council 50 per cent each of the fees.

Ms BUTLER - The new border becomes the half-way point on the Tasman Bridge.

Mr TUCKER - Knowing local councils, I don't think they'll be splitting the costs. They'll want the lot themselves, both of them.

CHAIR - We won't go there. We don't really know exactly what the score is yet and whether it has to go through a DA or not.

Ms RATTRAY - We'll leave that to others to decide.

CHAIR - I guess on the risk and sustainability, I don't think it's here. In the event that you do have to go through a development application, as to what happens. It just extends the time line, presumably?

Ms HAWKINS - In terms of the procurement options that we're looking at, part of that would require that we would be expecting that the contractor would undertake design efforts on the bridge so that it can incorporate some of the constructability aspects and the innovation for the project. With any planning approvals, we would look at how that might work with that design effort undertaken by the contractor, just in terms of having final scope of what was going to be delivered.

Ms RATTRAY - If there was an issue, could you put it into a major project and then bypass the councils.

Ms HAWKINS - I think I have to take that on notice.

Ms RATTRAY - That was just me thinking out loud.

CHAIR - I am sure it would fit that. Okay, state's procurement strategy implementation and delivery, state's procurement strategy and procurement documentation including the project technical requirements may not be contemporary or comprehensive enough to reflect the complexity of the project, compromising project quality or causing extra costs. Are the chances of something like that occurring pretty low?

Ms HAWKINS - We are certainly aiming for them to be very low, having the requirements and what we want to see at the end of the project well documented and certainly comprehensively covered by the tender documents we have put out.

CHAIR - The contingency plans that are spoken of in the risk mitigation strategy there, do you have any of those currently being constructed, or is that something that is going to be a future thing?

Ms HAWKINS - I think that is something we are working through at the moment.

CHAIR - Any other questions on that? Over the page, continuing that table:

The community or the key stake holders could be dissatisfied with the proposed project scope causing loss of public and or political support.

My estimation is that probably not going to be a high risk, I think most of the communities would possibly support the concept that has been put forward here, but you do not have any evidence to show it might be a concern to some.

Ms HAWKINS - With the engagement we have done, both from our key stakeholders and broader public consultation, the project has generally received good feedback. There is a general recognition of the community of the need for the project, but, in saying we are mindful of the iconic nature of the bridge. There are quite a few different aspects to consider the safety, the usability of the bridge and the way it looks and we are trying to balance with what we deliver. From the project team's point of view, the engagement we have undertaken and the feedback we have received has been for the most part, positive.

CHAIR - With respect to the surface of these pathways obviously, we went over part of it this morning. Clearly, for bikes and other micro-mobility vehicles, slipping is a thing and being able to mitigate that sort of a nature, is that well and high in the mind of your specs and the like?

Ms HAWKINS - It certainly is part of the design development process of the treatment we might use for the pathway deck and has been considered with how we documented the project requirements.

CHAIR - Looking at that surface, I could see tyre marks going off in all directions.

Ms RATTRAY - I was not looking down, I was looking straight ahead.

CHAIR - Yes, on certain paths, it may be the part that is actually going to be demolished with the ramp. On that ramp there were quite a significant number of skid marks and things that seemed to end at the rail which indicates a sticky end for someone. It is well up there in consideration because clearly it is open to the weather and/or very cold mornings in winter.

Ms HAWKINS - Absolutely.

Ms BUTLER - Within this risk table of risk event and major risk summary and the mitigation, the entry and exit points of the bridge for pedestrian, bike or micro-mobility vehicles - is that what you call them?

CHAIR - Yes, that is right. They are definitely vehicles, they move.

Ms BUTLER - Has there been assessment done because there will be a lot more additional traffic through those pedestrian, bike and micro-mobility vehicle entrance and exit points. A lot of those entrance and exit points at the moment are quite dark and there are known to be antisocial behaviour at those points. I am aware of definitely on the eastern shore side underneath the bridge.

Is there mindfulness of those considerations in the actual planning of where pedestrians and bikes will exit and enter?

Ms HAWKINS - Again, as part of the design development and the discussions with key stakeholders, we have considered the connections to the pathways and access from an accessibility point of view looking at opportunities for people to park near the pathways to use mobility scooters or those kinds of devices.

As the design is developed, we have also looked at the connections between the downstream and upstream side on each side of the bridge and how that will be better accommodated. We are looking at lighting as part of the project. All of those in combination would probably help to manage some of the issues you are raising about antisocial activity. It is interesting, to my knowledge, I do not think that came up as part of the consultation to date but it would be certainly interesting to consider it.

With people's thinking of the bridge, there were quite a number of other aspects they were probably focused on.

Ms BUTLER - Not the actual getting on and off section.

Ms HAWKINS - Just that antisocial kind of thing. We certainly have considered how it connects to the existing path networks.

Again, from our site inspection this morning, the narrowness of the connections compared to what it will be will be a significant improvement.

CHAIR - Very narrow. Are there any further questions?

Ms RATTRAY - Have we gone over the page yet, no?

CHAIR - Onto stakeholder engagement.

Ms RATTRAY - I have a question on stakeholder engagement. I noticed there were 397 public responses and there is certainly an outline clearly of the level of consultation with the community.

I note there has been input from the Indigenous community on their wanting to be inclusion of way-finding and instructional signage, artwork and storytelling. I did not see any allocation for artworks in the funding but I presume there will be. Is that correct?

Ms HAWKINS - At this stage, we have not allocated funding specifically or a part of the project cost for that component. The engagement that was undertaken, obviously, in this very first round we were using it as an information kind of gathering exercise. It was a great opportunity to sit down and talk to the traditional owners about what they see in outcomes of the bridge and how it might look.

Ms RATTRAY - That would be more likely at either end, rather than sitting perhaps on top of it.

Ms HAWKINS - It was quite interesting how that might be incorporated and what the opportunities might be. Certainly, some of the feedback was more about audio rather than visual aspects.

CHAIR - Storytelling?

Ms HAWKINS - Exactly. In terms of how we might deliver that as part of the project we are currently working through that.

Ms RATTRAY - A heap of headsets on top of it because you wouldn't hear over the noise of the traffic if it is anything like this morning.

Ms HAWKINS - It is interesting because we talked about things like QR codes that you could scan with your mobile device.

CHAIR - Hear it through your earphones.

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Ms HAWKINS - It was interesting discussing how but certainly that storytelling element came up with it.

CHAIR - Franklin Square has a bit of that where a canoe is on its side and has that audio. Having a QR code and listening to it through your earphones.

Ms RATTRAY - I found it interesting that there were a number of comments about the pathway colour. What was the colour that came out on top?

Ms HAWKINS - We didn't really have a poll on the top colour. There were some people that loved the purple and some people that weren't so fussed on the purple.

Ms RATTRAY - Teal is the new colour in Australia.

CHAIR - Oh, dear.

Ms HAWKINS - It is certainly not the colour committed to.

CHAIR - It is getting a bit political now. Colouration is something that might well work into the art side of it too.

Ms RATTRAY - It is part of the public responses. I found it interesting that people would take time to put in a submission about the pathway colour. I will await the decision.

Ms BUTLER - Could you run through some of the disability access provisions that you have been building into the project, especially in relation to detectable warning surfaces, tactile tiles or tactile paving for the visually impaired?

Ms HAWKINS - The key stakeholder workshops that we undertook speaking directly with representatives of various accessibility groups were a really good opportunity for the project team to expand on their knowledge that they had already in what might likely be required depending on a person's accessibility requirements and the varying natures of those and how we need to be able to work with all of those needs. It was quite helpful talking to the groups that we did talk to and that will certainly continue as the design is developed.

We talked to groups about potentially making sure that things like the edge of the path was clearly identified for vision impaired, talking about tactile indicator facilities for service dogs. Talking about people with mobility access requirements and taking into consideration accessible parking at each end of the bridge so that people can use the bridge for a recreational purpose if they require. We are currently working through that range of issues in documenting the requirements for the pathways.

Ms BUTLER - I think you answered everything because the next question I was going to ask you about was people who are wheelchair bound and whether or not the entry and exit points would be wide enough and accessible for people.

Ms HAWKINS - They will be and, as I mentioned, we have tried to accommodate that with the opportunity for people to park near the bridge if they cannot make it by independent means and potentially use the bridge.

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CHAIR - It will be mandatory under what used to be the Building Code of Australia but now a national building code, disability access for them.

Ms HAWKINS - Regarding the Tasman Bridge, from our site inspection this morning you would have noticed the grades going up to the centre of the bridge so it is quite a challenge working through that, which we are currently progressing.

CHAIR - Just a question on seating on the pathways, you've mentioned under Access and Connectivity, 7.2, 'rest points/seating on the pathways to allow people to take a break if less mobile'. How do you envisage that happening without impacting too much on the width?

Ms HAWKINS - The current concept does not include seating within the pathway width. In terms of the timeliness of the feedback we received, you'd be aware that it was basically closed just before we presented this submission, so we're currently working through that as well.

CHAIR - Okay, so this is feedback as opposed to being an element of the design.

Ms HAWKINS - That is right. That goes back into talking about accessibility requirements, and how it would work, potentially if you've got a vision impaired person looking for a shoreline or an edge of path, with seating and that kind of stuff. We need to take all of that into consideration.

CHAIR - And wind protection, I notice in the representation on the last page basically, it looks like it comes up to shoulder height for a person of medium height, the bottom part would be covered in to stop wind being an issue?

Ms HAWKINS - This is basically concept level information at the moment. Again, the feedback that we received from key stakeholders will need to take into consideration people who might be in mobility devices in their height line, and also younger people, children and that kind of thing.

CHAIR - To be able to look over?

Ms RATTRAY - To see out.

Ms HAWKINS - We are considering the impact of wind on the pathways, but in saying that, you need to appreciate the Tasman Bridge is very wide, and wind can come from all directions.

CHAIR - There is not a lot you can do to stop the wind, is there? It is going to be ever present.

Ms HAWKINS - But it is certainly being considered as part of the project.

CHAIR - Except for today, it wasn't that windy.

Ms HAWKINS - It was quite pleasant.

Ms RATTRAY - Some people remove their hats when they walk across.

PUBLIC

CHAIR - Yes, I did, I wasn't going to lose it under a truck. Okay. No other questions on records of stakeholder consultation? Compliance? Sorry, directly-affected landowners and property acquisition - not likely. The Aboriginal middens, they're well and truly away from any aspect of this construction. What consideration has been given to that?

Ms HAWKINS - I guess they've been picked up, so we're going to try and mitigate any impact on those as we develop the design.

CHAIR - Especially those that might be involved in construction, to make sure they're not impacting on them with any of their gear. Okay. Over the page, Noise, environmental flora and fauna, issues? There doesn't sound like there would be. Aboriginal heritage, we've talked about. Consultation there, you did say that you've had consultation with the Aboriginal community?

Ms HAWKINS - Yes.

CHAIR - Received reasonably positively?

Ms HAWKINS - Yes, we had some good discussions.

CHAIR - Now, 8.4, second last paragraph, under 'historic heritage assessment overview', two historic anchor point features have been identified on the western shores of the River Derwent, just to the south of the Tasman Bridge. I was thinking, there's that big concrete buttress that sits to the north, is that a heritage item?

Ms HAWKINS - Not to my knowledge. We can certainly confirm that.

CHAIR - However, it doesn't impact on this anyway?

Ms HAWKINS - Doesn't impact on the project, no.

CHAIR - Unless it gets in the way of somebody trying to do some work that way. Okay, I think that's pretty all it for me. Does any other member have any questions?

Ms RATTRAY - No.

CHAIR - There we go. Thank you.

Ms RATTRAY - Quite a small report, but it's got plenty of information, thank you.

CHAIR - It is not a cheap exercise.

Ms HAWKINS - I will note that the bridge designs in the pictures make it look quite flat.

CHAIR - Yes, it depends on the perspective. It is flat at the top.

Ms RATTRAY - They usually call that artistic licence.

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CHAIR - As we wrap up, we ask five questions that are really important to have on the record. We need you to answer these.

Does the proposed works meet an identified need or needs, or solve a recognised problem?

ALL WITNESSES - Yes.

CHAIR - Are the proposed works the best solution to meet identified needs, or solve a recognised problem within the allocated budget?

ALL WITNESSES - Yes.

CHAIR - That's understanding that there could be some slight changes in design, I presume.

Are the proposed works fit for purpose?

ALL WITNESSES - Yes.

CHAIR - It's not likely to get to the point where people can't use a micro mobility scooter or whatever because of some fundamental problem in design.

Do the proposed works provide value for money?

ALL WITNESSES - Yes.

CHAIR - Are the proposed works a good use of public funds?

ALL WITNESSES - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you. I will just remind you of a statement that I made when you started giving us your evidence. What you have said here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table, that privilege does not attach to comments you may make to anyone, including the media - even if you are just repeating what you said to us.

Do you understand that?

ALL WITNESSES - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you very much for providing us with the tour this morning. It was really valuable to go on site and see it in action, so to speak. Certainly noisy.

Ms HAWKINS - Thank you for your time. Of all of the projects I have managed for State Growth, this is probably one of the most significant, and best, in terms of what it does for the community, in terms of the outcomes.

I think it is a really important project and we are looking forward to delivering it.

CHAIR - We will deliberate on that right now. Thank you.

PUBLIC

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW

The committee adjourned at 2.57 p.m.