



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

Esk Main Road: St Pauls River Bridge and Culvert 3169 Replacement

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

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Legislative Council

*Mr Farrell
Mrs Taylor*

House of Assembly

*Mr Brooks (Chairman)
Ms Ogilvie
Mrs Rylah*

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1 INTRODUCTION

To Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate Warner AM, Governor in and over the State of Tasmania and its Dependencies in the Commonwealth of Australia.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY

The Committee has investigated the following proposal: -

Esk Main Road: St Pauls River Bridge and Culvert 3169 Replacement

and now has the honour to present the Report to Your Excellency in accordance with the Public Works Committee Act 1914 (the Act).

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This reference recommended the Committee approve works to replace the St Pauls River Bridge at Avoca and culvert 3169 at Fingal.
- 2.2 The bridge is located at the south western side of Avoca in the municipality of the Northern Midlands Council. The culvert is located on the eastern side of Fingal in the municipality of the Break O'Day Council, and crosses Township Creek and Fingal Rivulet. These structures are both located on Esk Main Road which is gazetted as a high mass load (HML) and high productivity (HPV) route.
- 2.3 St Pauls River Bridge and culvert 3169 are considered to be deficient for a HML and HPV route in terms of strength and width, as they were not designed for these purposes. Esk Main Road is at risk of being downgraded to the General Access Network, or lower, as the existing capacity of the respective structures is not sufficient to carry HML and HPV vehicles.
- 2.4 The proposed works at Avoca involve the construction of a new bridge over St Pauls River, new road alignment works and demolition of the existing bridge. The proposed works at Fingal involve the replacement of the large box culvert that crosses Fingal Rivulet with a twin box culvert that is wider than the current culvert.
- 2.5 The proposed works will ensure that Esk Main Road can continue as a HML and HPV route by replacing the existing structures with new structures that meet the relevant standards for strength and width, specifically SM1600 loading under AS5100.2 and an 8m road cross section. The proposed works will also result in a reduction in maintenance costs and provide safety improvements, due to a reduction in the rate of infrastructure deterioration and vehicle accidents.
- 2.6 The objectives of this project are:
 - Promoting transport efficiencies, by ensuring that Esk Main Road can continue to carry HML and HPV loads, thereby retaining Esk Main Road as a key strategic freight route; and

- improvements in safety and reduction in maintenance costs by providing structures that meet relevant standards for strength and width, and reducing the rate of infrastructure deterioration.
- 2.7 The full submission of the Department of State Development in support of this reference can be found on website of the Committee at:-

<http://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/ctee/Joint/works.htm>

3 PROJECT COSTS

- 3.1 Pursuant to the Message from His Excellency the Governor-in-Council, the estimated cost of the work is \$6.67 million.

The following Table details the p50 cost estimate for the project:

Cost Item	Amount (\$)
Department of State Growth Delivery Costs	\$1,120,000
Environmental Works	\$158,000
Temporary Works / Traffic Management	\$407,000
Public Utilities Adjustments	\$76,000
Earthworks	\$250,000
Drainage	\$80,000
Pavements	\$260,000
Traffic Signage, signals, signal and controls	\$155,000
Landscaping	\$47,000
Supplementary Items	\$498,000
Bridge Costs	\$2,813,000
Department of State Growth Supplied Material or Services	\$72,000
Contingency – inherent risks	\$335,000
Contingency – contingent risks	\$192,000
Escalation	\$285,000
TOTAL	\$6,750,000

4 EVIDENCE

- 4.1 The Committee commenced its inquiry on Monday, 29 June last with an inspection of the site of the proposed works at Fingal and Avoca. The Committee then returned to the Avoca Memorial Hall whereupon the following witnesses

appeared, made the Statutory Declaration and were examined by the Committee in public:-

- Craig Tarbotton, Project Manager, Transport Infrastructure Services, Department of State Growth; and
- Andrew Hargrave; Asset Engineer Bridges, Transport Infrastructure Services, Department of State Growth.

Background/Overview

4.2 Mr Tarbotton provided the following overview of the proposed works:

The current project before you is for the replacement of two existing structures, as we have described. One is the St Paul River bridge and the second is a box culvert at Fingal, although technically it is still a bridge. We anticipate these projects will commence construction in approximately October this year, spanning through until the end of June 2016. Our internal estimates - our P50 estimates, meaning that 50 per cent probability we will get prices below this - is \$6.75 million, which is slightly different to the \$6.67 million mentioned earlier.

The St Pauls River bridge is called a 'super T bridge'. It is a very common design approach for structures of this nature. The new bridge will be approximately 8 metres longer than the current bridge. The final bridge, including abutments, will be 90 metres. I believe the current bridge as it stands now is around 82 metres. The St Pauls River bridge will require the acquisition of approximately 130 square metres of Heritage-listed land belonging to the Northern Midlands Council. The project has a permit-to-take issued by DPIPW for the removal of endangered flora. There is a number of small pockets of flora there and we have a permit to take that number of plants. There are two isolated Aboriginal artefacts that were identified on the site prior to our design phase. Those artefacts have been identified geographically and we will be placing an exclusion zone around those artefacts to prevent any disturbance by our contractor or by the general public.

Need for the Proposed Works

4.3 The Committee questioned the witnesses on the need for the proposed works:

.....As we have mentioned, both structures are under strength when we measure them against the latest strength standard AS5100. AS5100 has a design load within it which is essentially a future base load. It is a vehicle that currently does not exist but we are anticipating that a vehicle of this nature will come into existence. If such a vehicle was to come into existence or become operational, these bridges could not carry that design load. Additionally, the two current structures are under strength for heavy vehicles currently using the bridge.

Esk Main Road is classified as HPV - high productivity vehicle - and HML - higher mass limit. The government has identified Esk Main Road as a strategic corridor and freight route that allows access of freight transport from the centre of Tasmania to the east coast. At present there are a number of heavy vehicle transporters that wish to use this route to get to, say, St Marys or the east coast. They can do so under permit from Andrew's section. That section will evaluate the particular load. However, to ensure the transportation of freight can occur freely from the centre of Tasmania across to the east coast we need to upgrade these structures.

4.4 Mr Tarbotton indicated that this project was part of an overarching program to upgrade Esk Main Road to accommodate future freight loads. The Committee

questioned the witnesses further on future upgrades of Esk Main Road, including proposed timeframes:

Mr Tarbotton -There are also a number of others that will be upgraded in the future to allow transportation to occur freely and without the need to apply for permits prior to transporting goods or freight.

Mrs TAYLOR - How many more structures do you need to upgrade? What would be the time frame? You are saying it can't be classified as that kind of road until they are all done, is that right?

Mr HARGRAVE - It is currently classified as HML and HPV, so those vehicles are already allowed to use and do use the route. After these two structures are replaced it is my understanding there are three more we would be looking to replace as part of an upgrade of Esk Main Road. The vehicles Craig mentioned - the higher productivity vehicle and the high mass limit vehicle - currently use Esk Main Road, even though in theory there are a number of structures that have been highlighted through assessment as being unsuitable. Just because they are deemed as unsuitable doesn't necessarily mean we would move straightaway to prevent vehicles from accessing those routes. That has a knock-on effect to the economy and to business. Those vehicles for a number of bridges, including the two we have just mentioned, are under strength for the high productivity and high mass limit vehicle. This project is to move to a position where they are suitable for those vehicles, with a longer-term view of making all the structures on Esk Main Road suitable for high productivity and high mass limit vehicles.

Mrs TAYLOR - Do you have a time line for the other three? Is it in forward Estimates? Does State Growth know what it is planning?

Mr TARBOTTON - Yes. We do not have a definite time frame to upgrade the three remaining structures but we do have a future budget committed against Esk Main Road. It is not simply the bridges we need to upgrade; the entire length of Esk Main Road has to be addressed. At the moment we are widening portions of it. We have widened from Conara through to Avoca so we achieve three-metre lane width plus a one-metre sealed shoulder. We need that for vehicle safety as well as freight transport. At the moment the department has \$13 million in the future budget for Esk Main Road, which includes our road widening and these three bridges. That funding, that budget has been allocated against FY 2017-18. It's being discussed in determining whether we can bring that forward, however amongst that mix we also have St Marys Pass, which at the moment is causing issues for business. That \$13 million has been set aside in theory predominantly for St Marys Pass, however we do not expect the St Marys Pass project to require \$13 million. There will be a balance of funds available but not at the moment. It is allocated against FY 2017-18.

Breakdown of Project Costs

4.5 The Committee sought some clarification from the witnesses on the proportion of the budget allocated for each component of the proposed works:

CHAIR - How much is the culvert upgrade and how much is the bridge, out of the \$6.75 million, roughly?

Mr TARBOTTOM - That is the project cost, the \$6.75 million. It is not construction cost. I could not quote you the figures; it is broken down there. It is approximately \$500 000 for the Fingal culvert. The bridgeworks - that is both structures - is approximately \$5 million and \$4.5 for St Paul's.

Consultation

- 4.6 The Committee sought clarification from the witnesses on the nature and scope of the community consultation process which had been undertaken and the following exchange took place:

Mrs TAYLOR - What community consultation have you done and what does the community say about both of these projects?

Mr TARBOTTON - We undertook to have a two-week public display. That public display was housed in the post office here in St Pauls in Avoca. That public display had A1 size photographs or images of the two bridges. We had the plan view, the two elevations and a cross-section, as well as a locality map to show where the bridge was. We provided forms for the public to make comment about what they thought of these public displays. That went for two weeks.

Prior to that we met with key town persons, and the names of these people were provided to us by the Northern Midlands Council. We originally met with Northern Midlands Council and their planning department to make sure there were no issues from council's perspective. They gave us the names of four persons to contact that were key to Avoca. I could not tell you their names off the top of my mind. One was Ms Mary Knowles. Mary Knowles is also a councillor for Northern Midlands Council. Mary Knowles was the primary point of contact with the township of Avoca. Mary was put forward by the Northern Midlands Council as the primary person to make contact with and Mary would know the other key stakeholders from the town. We met with those on two occasions on site. We explained the project, what the scope was about the new bridge and the one at Fingal.

From the public display, we received four written comments. The comments in general, to summarise them, asked us to consider a number of issues. One was speeding, which is not to do with our project, but they considered vehicle traffic through here is too high. When I say that is not to do with the this particular project, the department has considered the vehicle speed through here, and 12 months ago we did reduce the speed from 60 down to 50. You will notice as you come across the bridge it is 50. It is 50 through the township. The residents' concern is that people are still speeding. Our traffic engineering branch has considered that. They did so last year by reducing the 60 to 50 in the hope we would deter people from speeding. It obviously has not happened. Other than asking the police at Fingal to increase their surveillance and monitoring of the region -

Mrs TAYLOR - Or a permanent speed camera.

Mr TARBOTTON - Or a permanent speed camera perhaps, yes. That is hearsay at the moment. There is no evidence from our perspective. Perhaps a speed camera would be one way to support that claim. That was one of the concerns addressed by the residents.

Another concern was the accessibility of the new structure to pedestrians. It was raised by those four that they would prefer to have pedestrian access across that new bridge. The existing bridge does not have pedestrian access. The intended new structure does not have pedestrian access. We have ensured that the new bridge design is capable of having a lightweight structure attached to that in the future if demand increases. At the moment there is no evidence there is demand for pedestrian access. When I say 'demand', there is anecdotal evidence that a person is crossing the bridge, not necessarily persons. The cost to provide pedestrian access would be in the order of \$400 000 to \$500 000. We feel as a department, given that it is anecdotal and only a single person is crossing the bridge, perhaps that \$500 000 is not value for money.

- 4.7 The Committee also questioned the witnesses on the consultation undertaken with the Fingal community for the replacement of the Fingal Rivulet culvert (culvert 3169). The witnesses noted that no formal consultation was undertaken;

rather the process was one of informing the council of the proposed works, who then inform the residents:

Mrs TAYLOR - Consultation you did in Fingal?

Mr HARGRAVE - No. The Fingal culvert is under Break O'Day, the St Pauls River Bridge is under the Northern Midlands Council. The Fingal culvert does not require a development planning permit because the nature of the works is considered a minor upgrade or a minor change to the existing structure. The St Pauls River Bridge is significantly larger than that, which does require a DA. With the Break O'Day Council we made contact via the council. We informed the council of the works. We have forwarded to them the images you are currently looking at. Break O'Day Council have informed us that they will make contact with the local residents prior to project starting. They will be informing the residents.

Mrs TAYLOR - Informing is different from consulting. I am not saying it is necessarily your responsibility; I am thinking that because that road is going to be closed, the people who are on that road are going to be -

Mr HARGRAVE - In Pedder Street?

Mrs TAYLOR - Yes. They are going to be affected, aren't they? You would hope they would have been informed about it before it happened.

Mr HARGRAVE - Via our consultants, we have made contact with the immediate properties around Pedder Street to inform them that there will be a closing of the road. We have passed onto the council all this information and have now mailed that out. There are two more steps and it is not consultation but it is informing them. Prior to the start of the project, the department will do a mail-out to all the residents informing them the project will start on a certain date and is expected to be completed by a certain date. When the contractor has a contract and they are about to start works, they will also contact the residents. That is simply to inform them of the start of the works.

Future use of the old St Pauls River Bridge

- 4.8 The Committee questioned the witnesses on what was planned for the old St Pauls River Bridge. The witnesses indicated that the plan for the site involved demolition of the existing bridge, as the preference was to not have two bridges to maintain. The Committee noted that the existing bridge could be retained, to be used as a pedestrian crossing, and would thereby provide a saving on demolition costs:

Mrs TAYLOR - What are you intending to do with the old bridge?

Mr TARBOTTON - The old bridge will be demolished.

Mrs TAYLOR - Why?

Mr TARBOTTON - There is no need for two bridges for vehicle traffic.

Mrs TAYLOR - That could be a pedestrian crossing.

Mr TARBOTTON - It most certainly could.

Mrs TAYLOR - If you grassed it, it could be a pedestrian crossing. It would also save you the cost of demolishing and taking away the bridge, would it not?

Mr TARBOTTON - Yes, most certainly.

Mr HARGRAVE - It does. From an asset perspective we would prefer not to have an orphaned asset as well. Instead of having one bridge to maintain, inspect and rehabilitate in the future, we would then have two.

Mrs TAYLOR - If it is pedestrian access only, I would not think that would be a huge problem, seeing it is still supposed to have 60 years left in its life.

Mr HARGRAVE - From a load perspective that is right, yes.

Mrs TAYLOR - Yes. If you grassed it over, as you tell me you are going to do with the roadway -

Mr HARGRAVE - That is on the approaches, yes.

Mr TARBOTTON - You are right. The cost would not be exorbitant by any means. The stability of the existing structure is capable of pedestrian loads. It is capable of vehicle loads. It is just simply not capable of withstanding future loads. As Andrew has mentioned, currently heavy vehicles are stressing the bridge.

- 4.9 The Committee questioned the witnesses further on this matter. The witnesses noted that there had been some discussion with the Northern Midlands Council on retaining the existing bridge and transferring ownership to the Council. The witnesses indicated that this was the Department's preference if a pedestrian crossing was to be provided:

Mrs TAYLOR - I can understand why you want to replace it, but why do you have to take the old one away?

Mr TARBOTTON - We do not have to. We approached the Northern Midlands Council. When the residents raised the concern of pedestrian access, they did raise it verbally prior to the public display. I informed the members from the public who came that this department felt that investment of \$500 000 is not supported by the demand. However, we would be willing to consider transferring ownership of the existing bridge to Northern Midlands Council. We approached the Northern Midlands Council. I approached the general manager at my level and I raised the matter with them. I then asked our general manager to talk with the council. That discussion is ongoing. My understanding is that Northern Midlands Council are willing to discuss that. However, the residents of Avoca would prefer not to use the old bridge as a pedestrian crossing. They would prefer a new pedestrian crossing on the new bridge.

Mrs TAYLOR - There is only one, you said.

Mr TARBOTTON - Yes, correct.

Mrs TAYLOR - I am thinking about the cost for you to actually remove the structure. There has to be a cost involved there as well.

Mr TARBOTTON - You are right; it would be a cost saving to the department if we did not demolish it. Now, you cannot discount the cost of maintenance. Andrew is correct. Even though it is only pedestrian loads or traffic, there will still be maintenance. We will need hand rails to prevent falls. You will still need to make sure the drains are maintained et cetera. The bridge will last for 60 years, so there is another 60 years of maintenance costs.

Mrs TAYLOR - It will last a whole lot longer; it would last 60 years for vehicular traffic.

Mr TARBOTTON - Yes.

Mr HARGRAVE - The deterioration of the asset happens because of the environment it is in as well, not just from use, so it will continue to deteriorate and that is where you have to intervene at the appropriate time to maintain it. You are quite right; it will deteriorate at a faster rate when it is accommodating heavy vehicles, but it will still continue to deteriorate over time even if it is just left standing there. That has to be inspected and there has to be maintenance intervention while ever it is being used by the public to make sure that it is safe.

Mrs TAYLOR - If you were to spend half a million dollars to put a pedestrian bit on that new bridge, would that then be your responsibility rather than the council's?

Mr HARGRAVE - Yes.

Mr TARBOTTON - The department's preference, if a pedestrian crossing has to be provided, is for the existing bridge to be transferred to council. We have offered to provide some funds to the council for future maintenance, recognising that there would be cost savings for us, but at the same time there would be a cost penalty to the council to take over. We have offered that to them - not formally at the moment; I believe that is a discussion as opposed to official documents being transferred. The reluctance to adopt that particular approach might well be from the residents of Avoca themselves.

Mr FARRELL - ...The local governments are generally fairly reluctant to take on management of bridges.

Mr TARBOTTON - Definitely.

Mrs TAYLOR - It just seems a waste to demolish it when there is no need to.

Aboriginal Heritage

4.10 The witnesses noted that an Aboriginal cultural heritage survey had been undertaken for the project and two Aboriginal heritage sites in the vicinity of the St Pauls River bridge component of the proposed works were identified.

4.11 The Committee questioned the witnesses on how these sites would be protected and whether Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania supported these protection measures:

Mrs TAYLOR - Can we talk about the Aboriginal artefacts as well?

Mr TARBOTTON - Again, during our planning phase we conduct both a Aboriginal and European heritage survey to ensure that there are no artefacts of significance. Two were identified. I honestly cannot tell you what they are. I have read the report.

Mr HARGRAVE - It is a deposit. Some artefact deposits, I think.

Mrs TAYLOR - You are not talking about a midden, obviously?

Mr TARBOTTON - No. One is called a 'scatter' which is several multiple individual items. Often they are just flakes of stone. Of the two, we had a scatter and an individual item, an artefact. That individual artefact was a piece of stone. We engaged the Aboriginal heritage officer to relocate that back within the centre of the scatter area, out of harm's reach from our contractor. That individual artefact would have been directly in the path of our construction works. We either modify our design to avoid that or we request permission to remove it. What we prefer to do as a choice is to ensure that those items remain as is. In the event that it can't, then we need to apply for a permit to remove. We approached the appropriate authorities; they removed the artefact for us and relocated it to within the scatter.

Mrs TAYLOR - And the scatter is not affected by the roadworks?

Mr TARBOTTON - No. The scatter is away from our construction works. To ensure that wandering contracting staff do not enter that we will put an exclusion zone up. It is simply a barrier fence around it. The sign says 'Exclusion Zone - Do Not Enter'.

Mrs TAYLOR - The Aboriginal heritage people are happy with this solution?

Mr TARBOTTON - Yes.

Traffic Management for the Fingal Culvert Replacement

4.12 The Committee noted that the plan for the works at Fingal Rivulet Culvert involved the closure of Pedder Street and the section of Esk Main Road in which the culvert was located. The Committee questioned the witnesses as to the

traffic management measures that would be implemented to provide access for affected residents and facilitate the flow of traffic during the construction period:

Mr FARRELL - While the culvert is being reconstructed, what is in plan for traffic management in that area?

Mr TARBOTTON - We have to construct what we call a sidetrack or a diversion - it is not really a detour. That will consist of a temporary sealed road - temporary, as in only a few months - to one side of the current culvert. That sidetrack will consist of an embankment with some bitumen overlay and some drain structures underneath because we are crossing over both a creek and an overflow. We cannot nominate a period; as I mentioned earlier, that is the contractor's program and they will develop that based on the submission at bid. However, we do require them to have that in place for the shortest possible period, recognising that Pedder Street, the local road, will be closed off due to that diversion.

Mr FARRELL - There are no other options to cross?

Mr TARBOTTON - Yes, there is. There is a possibility that we close off Esk Main Road so that allows us to remove the existing structure and simply reinstate a new culvert. Our estimates are that it would require 48 hours. That is about the quickest we can imagine a contractor could do that work. Approximately 1 200 vehicles per day use Esk and of that 12 per cent to 15 per cent are heavy vehicles. The cost for the diversion is approximately \$100 000 - that is our internal estimate. We felt that to prevent access to those 1 200 vehicles, with 15 per cent of those being heavy vehicles, for the sake of \$100 000 is not the best way to use that, but we did consider it.

Project Tender

- 4.13 The Committee questioned the witnesses on aspects of the project tender, with the Committee seeking clarification on how the proposed works were expected to be undertaken. The witnesses indicated that it is not the practice to stipulate how a contractor undertakes the proposed works; rather the preference is to set tender parameters and allow contractors to submit project tenders that meet these parameters, which are then assessed by the Department:

Mrs TAYLOR - Are you planning to do the two at the same time?

Mr TARBOTTON - Yes. We try to anticipate how a contractor would undertake the works. We prefer not to stipulate how a contractor undertakes the works. That is their field of expertise. We do anticipate that a single civil contractor will run them concurrently. They will have two separate crews, one at St Pauls and one at Fingal, but that is not necessarily a guarantee. It may well be that the contractor will undertake Fingal first, complete that and move back to St Pauls and do the larger structure. Or the vice versa - the reverse, of that. We would anticipate that a confident contractor would undertake both sites at the same time.

Mrs TAYLOR - It looks to me as though the two projects are quite different, obviously.

Mr TARBOTTON - Yes.

Mrs TAYLOR - And this one here at Avoca is not going to interrupt the current flow of traffic too much, but the other one is. It is only going to take a minimum of 48 hours to replace the culvert, but that is going to cut off access to that street while it is being built. It seems that it would make sense to ask them to do that one quickly rather than to keep both projects going for whatever the length of the project time is.

Mr TARBOTTON - We have not stipulated that they must do it quickly. We have not nominated a timeframe. What we have done within our tender documents is we have

required our contractors to show how their program of work will complete Fingal in the shortest possible timeframe.

Mrs TAYLOR - That will be part of the criteria you will judge the tender.

Mr HARGRAVE - Yes, it is part of the tender assessment.

- 4.14 The Committee also sought some clarification on the whether there was an expectation that Tasmanian firms would be involved in the project. The following exchange took place:

Mrs TAYLOR - Would you be expecting it to be a Tasmanian contractor who gets the works?

Mr TARBOTTON - We hope it will be. We are limited in the number of contractors who have the pre-qualifications required to undertake this work. We have certain criteria that they must satisfy.

CHAIR - Is that because of the bridge?

Mr TARBOTTON - Yes, and the financial limits.

Mr HARGRAVE - It is two things. It is the financial capability of the organisation undertaking the works and then the technical capability of the organisation undertaking the works. There is a (B) pre-qualification and an (F) pre-qualification.

CHAIR - Obviously, you don't want Bob's Bobcat from wherever saying, 'Oh yeah, I can do that'.

Mr TARBOTTON - Yes.

Mrs TAYLOR - We have a number of contractors in Tassie that could do the work.

Mr TARBOTTON - Not a number; we have a few.

Mr HARGRAVE - There are a couple.

Mr TARBOTTON - In fact, there are only two.

Mrs TAYLOR - Two?

CHAIR - Is that because of bridge certification or because of the pre-qualification.

Mr TARBOTTON - It is the pre-qualification; but as Andrew has said, there are two aspects - the financial ability and then the technical. The bridge itself goes into a bridge category called B3. We have from B1 to B5. The nature of this bridge design or construction is that it requires B3. You have to have that experience now. It is essentially post-tensioning. We only have three contractors in the state that satisfy the (B) category. The financial aspect of the work takes it into the (F) category and we only have two contractors who have both the B3 and the financial ability to sustain this cost over a 12-month period.

CHAIR - They aren't paid up-front, I understand, so they have to cover the contractors and their employees.

Mr TARBOTTON - Yes.

CHAIR - ... The local benefit test will apply.

Mr TARBOTTON - Of course, it does. The contract is federally funded - 50 per cent. We will advertise this locally in Tasmania. We will not advertise it interstate. However, interstate contractors are eligible to bid provided they satisfy our pre-qualifications. No matter where the contractor comes from, they have to submit their plan as to how their works will benefit the Tasmanian economy. It is our expectation that regardless of where the contractor comes from, they will source a lot of their materials here. The labour will most likely be here. Certain key staff may not be if they are interstate, but the material will be sourced locally. We have the pre-casting yards capable of forming up the beams that we need, so we anticipate they would be fabricated here. All of the traffic management and associated works will come from Tasmania regardless if it does go to an interstate contractor.

Quality Control Post Construction

- 4.15 The Committee noted that there had been some quality control issues with road works which had been raised in Parliament. The Committee questioned the witnesses on how quality control would be managed for the project:

Mrs TAYLOR - Can I ask about quality control afterwards because one of the issues that has been raised a number of times, certainly in the Parliament over the last year or two, is that when roadworks are done, and The Sideling is one that has been named a couple of times, the bitumen put down seems to break up very quickly afterwards. I know there is weather and all that sort of stuff but what are you putting in place to make sure the work is completed satisfactorily and then afterwards that it stays? Obviously the bridge is not going to fall down but the road surface and stuff might be an issue.

Mr TARBOTTON - Most civil contracts have a defects period - a liability period. That is simply a warranty period. It is 12 months, so by the time the contractor reaches completion of the physical works they will enter into that 12-month period. During that period they are responsible to remedy any defects we identify. Obviously we prefer there are no defects, but defects do occur. During the construction phase the department engages our design consultant to provide contract administration. That is essentially our quality control, our monitoring of the works. For this particular work we have engaged Pitt & Sherry to act. They are both our designers and our contract administrators. They will have two staff. One staff will be on site at least three days per week. It is not a requirement but we have nominated in our contract of engagement that we expect them to be on site three days per week. The second member of that team will be essentially handling the contractual relationships with the contractor and obviously the construction relationship. We anticipate that this contract administration team will monitor the works to assure we achieve an outcome. Then, of course, there is the defects period.

Mrs TAYLOR - I am aware of the defects period and the contractor is obliged to remedy any defects, but there does not seem to be a penalty if they don't, or is there a financial penalty?

Mr TARBOTTON - It is not a true penalty in a sense. We do not fine our contractors. We retain security funds. They are obliged to remedy a defect at their cost if it is a defect of their work. We have contractual clauses that allow us to instruct them to undertake that work. If they do not undertake the works we can, if need be, do the works ourselves and charge that cost back to them. If they fail to comply with our instructions then we do have recourse back to their securities.

CHAIR - That would also reflect on their future work given you would ask for references on past performance.

Mr TARBOTTON - Yes.

Mr HARGRAVE - There is a process of contractor performance reporting, and any poor performance should be picked up in that.

5 DOCUMENTS TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE

- 5.1 The following document was taken into evidence and considered by the Committee:

- Esk Main Road: St Pauls River Bridge and Fingal Rivulet Culvert Replacement – Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, Department of State Growth, June 2015.

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 The Committee does have concerns that the demolition of the existing St Pauls River Bridge is a sub-optimal outcome. The Committee is of the opinion that the community would be better served if the existing St Pauls River Bridge was not demolished as part of the proposed works. The Committee believes that not only would this avoid the cost of demolition, it would provide an asset that the community could utilise for safer pedestrian and bicycle access and other activities.
- 6.2 The Committee therefore recommends that the Department of State Growth investigate options for retention of the existing bridge, including continuing its discussions with the Northern Midlands Council on the potential to transfer ownership of the existing bridge to the Council.
- 6.3 The Committee is satisfied that the need for the proposed works has been established. Once complete, the works will ensure that Esk Main Road remains a key strategic freight route by improving its capacity to carry both high mass limit and high productivity vehicle traffic. The works will also lead to improved safety outcomes and reduce the ongoing maintenance costs for these structures.
- 6.4 Accordingly, the Committee recommends the project, in accordance with the documentation submitted, at an estimated total cost of \$6,670,000.

**Parliament House
Hobart
24 July 2015**

**Adam Brooks MP
Chairman**