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**THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET AT THE CONFERENCE ROOM, BEACHFRONT HOTEL, BICHENO, ON WEDNESDAY 21 AUGUST 2019.**

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### **GREAT EASTERN DRIVE AND TASMAN HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS**

**Mr KEVIN BOURNE**, PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM LEADER, **Ms HELEN CORDELL**, NETWORK PLANNER, **Mr STEFANO CONFORTI**, PROJECT MANAGER, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mr Valentine) - Welcome. Before you begin giving your evidence, I would like to inform you of some of the important aspects of committee proceedings, which is essential for this particular hearing. This is a proceeding of parliament and this means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege. It is an important legal protection that allows individuals giving evidence to a parliamentary committee to speak with complete freedom without fear of being sued or questioned in any court of law outside of parliament. It applies to ensure that parliament receives the very best information when conducting its inquiries. It is important to be aware that this protection is not afforded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside the confines of the parliamentary proceedings. It is a public hearing, so members of the public and journalists may be present and this means your evidence may be reported. Do you understand?

**Witnesses** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - You have an opportunity to make an opening statement in relation to this reference.

**Mr CONFORTI** - I'll describe what the Department of State Growth would like to present today, that is, some upgrades of the Great Eastern Drive from Orford to St Helens, along 176 kilometres of road. The funding for this project will be part of the \$72 million investment the Government is putting towards improving the tourist routes around the state. The project drives to improve the safety, improve the drivers' experience and improve the reliability of the time to travel along the Great Eastern Drive. Today, we will look at two projects that are part of this program. One is between Diana's Basin to St Helens, and another one is for the rest of the section between Diana's Basin down to Orford.

There was a report done on this stretch of road, which took into consideration the main junctions and pull-over areas along the Great Eastern Drive. There was an analysis done on all the junctions to understand which ones of those we give priority. Again, that is in terms of safety and driving experience for tourists and locals.

In the section between Diana's Basin and St Helens, we looked at opportunity to overtake slower vehicles and to improve the section of the road. I am not sure how much detail you want to talk about at the moment in terms of technicalities of the project. The options that were suggested in the report were to include a northbound overtaking facility, two overtaking facilities in the southbound direction, and improve some 2.6 kilometres of road from a 2.8-metre lane to a 3-metre lane plus 1 metre of sealed shoulder and 0.5 metre of verge. Drainage and other physical characteristics of the existing alignment, including the sealing, was looked at and there was a suggestion for the best option, which is the one that I just described.

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In the section between Diana's Basin to Orford there were some 67 locations that an external consultant looked at. They used the multi-criteria assessment to look at the safety and the broader community acceptance.

There was a stakeholder engagement process, which was involving the locals directly impacted by the proposal, the local councils and the East Coast Regional Tourism Organisation that I understand was created on the east coast in 2012. That was preliminary stakeholder engagement. The stakeholder engagement will continue to the end of the process, so the wider community will be involved in different ways; that can be direct contact, meetings, public displays or even just on the website. We take a combination of all these initiatives during the project.

The allocated budget for this work is spread over three years with an amount of \$24 million or about that figure and that will be spread in this current financial year and the next two. The timing for this will be going from now. This one - together with the construction industry, a meeting we had - is the first step of the process. The department intend to go to tender with the 30 intersections that are the priorities out of the 67 that had been looked at in September. They will award the contract in December and start the physical works, continuing design and investigation as necessary, from January 2020. The department will look into a different set of procurement methods to carry out the works in the next three financial years and there will be two different approaches for the two different projects. I am not sure whether we want to go through that one now or whether we want to continue with the description of the project or answering questions.

**CHAIR** - You could cover that aspect you mentioned and then we can go to questions.

**Mr BOURNE** - As Stefano mentioned, there are two projects. The first project is the St Helens to Diana's Basin. We will prepare a detailed design and tender that in the middle of next year, 2020. The other one is the 30 intersections. We are proposing we tender that so that we get early contract involvement from the construction industry. The contractors appointed will then engage designers and engage stakeholder engagement tasks to help further define the scope, then firm up a cost for the works, and construct the works. There will an ongoing involvement between the department and the contractor, and the designers and stakeholders.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. I will give members the opportunity to ask overview questions as opposed to specifics within the report. We will go through the report page by page.

**Ms RATTRAY** - In our earlier briefing this morning, you indicated that if the budget wasn't sufficient to undertake the two projects as identified in the submission that we have, the Diana's Basin stretch may be left out. I need to understand why that was chosen to be left out if there weren't enough funds in preference to some of the other 30 items on our list to be looked at as well.

**Mr CONFORTI** - At this stage, we have concept designs for both of the projects. The concept design would be high-level descriptions of what we intend to do. Following that, there will be investigations related to the habitat and the flora and the fauna, the heritage and planning issues, perhaps, depending on what kind of species we find. We may have to put in planning applications. At this stage it is a bit high level, and we are looking simply at concept estimates.

Once the works progress and more is known, the estimates refine as we go to when there would be the tender. It is the tender that will give us the market cost of the works. We have contingencies at this stage, just with the concept estimates, and because of that we may have extra funding or, as

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it happens, we may be a little bit short. Because of that, we will have to adjust the scope of the work; it may or may not be necessary. What I was saying in the previous sessions is that if the works cost more than what we predicted, we will have to adjust the scope. We thought perhaps an overtaking lane of the two in the southbound direction would be the least necessary part of the works. In the worst-case scenario that we do not have sufficient funds to realise the whole scope of the work, something will have to come out.

**Ms RATTRAY** - There won't be a relook at the 30 identified upgrades on this list?

**Mr CONFORTI** - That is a separate tender, so the 30 locations is one tender and the Diana's Basin to St Helens is another tender. We update the presentation in the packaging, but in actual fact they will go out to market separately.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Can you outline for us what are the two different amounts of money in that \$24 million? I think one is \$8.3 million for one - for the record, please outline what the two different amounts of money are for each different project.

**Mr CONFORTI** - The \$8.3 million, as Helen just said, is for Diana's Basin to St Helens. The rest will apply to the rest of the Great Eastern Drive from Orford to Diana's Basin.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Can I clarify then? On the paperwork we have the budget is \$8.18 million. The other one is \$11.9 million. Can I confirm what the numbers are? If it is \$8.3 million -

**Mr CONFORTI** - That is just a spread for each financial year, but the department has the flexibility to move that amount of money around, depending on how the works progress.

**Ms CORDELL** - Also the election commitment says \$8.3 million.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I wonder why we have \$8.18 million in our budget.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - That is the cash flow. Diana's Basin is not being tendered until next year so that would not be in the 2019-20 cash flow. I would say it would be cash flowed over two separate financial years.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Thank you, that is worth putting on the record.

**Ms BUTLER** - I have an overall question with the 30 different projects. As part of the negotiation process, with whoever is successful in winning that tender, will there be a program to graduate each bit of construction as it goes? Over 18 months you could have 30 different projects going with stop-starting of traffic. Would that be part of the contract?

**Mr CONFORTI** - We will definitely look into the traffic management aspect. Traffic management is very much part of each of our projects. We have not done that exercise yet but we will try to spread them around or maybe group them, depending on how the traffic can be managed.

**Ms BUTLER** - Then that's quite a normal expectation with contracts? I know at one stage with the Midland Highway it was stop-start, stop-start. That was quite hard for the community after a while. A lot of east coast people are really dependent on that road, getting children to and from school and to work, and so forth. I wanted to clarify that there would be an agreement.

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**Ms CORDELL** - With the Midland Highway, the ideal was that it would roll out from either end and come towards the middle. When they started looking at individual projects and what were the priorities, that is when it started to have those problems. They realised it could not be a neat line. They had to deal with the priorities and that meant they were in different locations.

**Mr BOURNE** - Also, the Midland Highway had separate contractors; they each had their own bit to do. Whereas this will be one contractor and part of the requirements in their contract will be to minimise impacts on traffic and stakeholders and to coordinate when they do certain works to minimise the impacts.

**CHAIR** - That answers the question I had as to whether there was going to be more than one contractor for those 30 projects.

**Ms RATTRAY** - It's likely there will be sub-contractors.

**Mr BOURNE** - Yes, but it will be under the management of one contractor.

**CHAIR** - Moving to the first page, the introduction - there are no page numbers on this, so we are going to have to go by section numbers. Are there any questions on the introductory part 1.1 and 1.2? No. Then the page starting with 1.4? No. The page starting with 2 - Project Details? I have a comment about the project details. The east coast is a very popular destination for cyclists and cycle tourism is reasonably popular. I am concerned that their needs have been considered in terms of the width of the road and the verges. You have a 1 metre width here. Bearing in mind that vehicles have to maintain a 1.5 metre distance from cyclists, is this sufficient for cycle tourists to be able to negotiate these areas? Do you believe that is the case?

**Mr CONFORTI** - The areas that we are going to upgrade will have a 1 metre shoulder, as I said. I also said that we will have just individual areas along 176 kilometres of road. It is not part of the scope to include a cycling lane or anything like that for the 176 kilometres.

**CHAIR** - No, I appreciate that. I am just interested. You are trying to improve the entrances to wineries and other businesses on this list, you are not just considering the ease of traffic flow past those points. Surely you are also considering the safety of cyclists at that point. Here in the description it talks about 3 metres, then a sealed shoulder of 1 metre in width, and then a 0.5-metre-wide verge to accommodate safety barrier where required. I am concerned that the cyclist is sort of squashed into half a metre of space.

**Mr CONFORTI** - They can travel along the 1 metre shoulder that is on the left-hand side of the side-line marking.

**Ms CORDELL** - Also councils are doing some off-road paths. On some sections along the Great Eastern Road there are wider passes off on the side. I know that Diana's Basin to St Helens, the council is doing from St Helens back to the mountain bike facilities, like Flagstaff Road an off-road pass and those sorts of things. One metre is deemed sufficient if they go on there, but over time we are expecting that councils do a lot of this offroad that they have already started doing.

**CHAIR** - Okay, it something to bear in mind each time you attend to a new project.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Are you going to straighten any of the Basin Creek Road to St Helens Point Road. It has a real snake section. Or are you just going to bang out the sides?

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**Mr CONFORTI** - Some of the bends currently signposted to be a 50-kilometre-designated speed will be improved.

**Ms RATTRAY** - They will be lifted to 80 k?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes.

**Ms CORDELL** - My understanding is that when we are doing the road widening, we will have the 3-metre and the 1-metre sealed shoulder and the 0.5 metre verge. Then, where we are doing some overtaking facilities, there might be a little bit of widening, but we won't be doing any major realignments. If we do that then the money won't give a consistent outcome.

**Ms RATTRAY** - While you are doing the work, why wouldn't you take the opportunity to straighten up that snaky bend through there? I expect that is probably one of the windiest sections from Basin Creek bridge to St Helens Point Road. Was this considered in any of the discussions?

**Ms CORDELL** - I think price because the election commitment is for overtaking opportunities and general road improvements. They have gone down the path of trying to have a more consistent feel by generally widening for all traffic, including cyclists, and then putting in a couple of overtaking opportunities.

**CHAIR** - So you are saying it is not a general reconstruction?

**Ms CORDELL** - Yes, because that would take far more money, like what is happening on the Midland Highway and other areas. It would not be ruled out in the future. This is what the election commitment is, it improves the safety.

**Ms BUTLER** - There is a section of road they have had big complications with over many years. It is on the way to Hobart when you leave Orford along the river. I should have looked up the actual name of that section. They have found every time they have tried to extend that and provide an extra lane, it hasn't worked properly and there have been really big problems with that part of the road. It reminds me a lot of this section. Are you prepared for some budget blowouts with things like this, as it is so windy in that area?

**Ms CORDELL** - As they go into the detail, the projects will be honed down. There is no budget blowout because we have been given a budget we have to work within, which is why with the program you will look at individual projects and see how the prices go, and adjust accordingly. If there was some massive red flag, then you have discussions. But we have been given a budget we achieve the best we can value for money and safety-wise.

**CHAIR** - If it blows out to a significant extent, you will not be trying to reduce the safety side things with the projects there. You will be taking whole components out.

**Ms CORDELL** - That would be something to be considered in the program.

**CHAIR** - Thanks for that.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - On this map - and there are no page numbers - it shows kerb realignments through this section, and this section.

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**Ms CORDELL** - That was looked at initially and all the costings were large.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - So that is not what is happening now?

**Ms CORDELL** - No, not any major realignments. That would have been from the initial investigations where you look at every single factor. You can do the highway, then take a step back and say what is going to give us safety outcomes, value for money within the budget that has been set and with the expected outcomes.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - So kerb improvement realignment R3B and 3A, are no longer part of this?

**Ms CORDELL** - Not with the recommended package we have come up with.

**Ms RATTRAY** - You would have to ask why it is still there if it is not something the committee is assessing.

**Mr CONFORTI** - That was the area of the presentation of where we started and what was considered in the option assessment.

**Ms CORDELL** - So the background.

**CHAIR** - With respect to the second dot point under 2.1 -

north bound overtaking facility between St Helens and Diana's Basin - designated as T4 on longitudinal uphill grade nominally 4 to 5 per cent maximum to allow for the noticeable speed difference of larger vehicles.

What length is the overtaking lane to be?

**Ms CORDELL** - T4? It is about 420 metres. Again, this is very high level and once it gets into detail that could change.

**CHAIR** - So 420 metres. I know that on the Forcett to Copping stretch of road they have some smallish overtaking opportunities. The degree of angle of those particular opportunities might mean that you can have an effective passing, but sometimes things get a bit squeezey. Are you convinced 420 metres is sufficient?

**Ms CORDELL** - At the high level, it appears to be sufficient, yes. It has taken into account the gradient, that speed differential. Once you get into detail that may change.

**CHAIR** - Can you clear a technical issue for me? When they talk about percentages, I used to work with DMR and Public Works Department for 10 years, and it was always degrees and you know what zero is and what 90 is. When you talk percentages like this on a technical basis, for my information, is 90 degrees considered 100 per cent? Is this what you are saying? How do the percentages work?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Forty-five degrees is considered 100 per cent. I

**CHAIR** - Forty-five degrees is 100?

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**Mr CONFORTI** - In this, case we have 4 per cent would mean it will raise 4 metres every 100 longitudinal metres.

**CHAIR** - Okay. That is how we consider that.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - So 5 per cent would be 5 metres every 100?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It is good to clear that up.

**Ms RATTRAY** - A couple of points. What communication has there been with the community about the reduction of the posted speed limit to an 80 kilometre?

**Mr CONFORTI** - The local council was supportive of that.

**Ms RATTRAY** - The department is relying on the fact the Break O'Day Council has had that conversation with the community?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes, we did. The department through their consultants had that conversation.

**Ms RATTRAY** - In the past we have seen a new upgrade of road, but all we get is this great big drop on one or both sides, quite significant. This is not necessarily helping with the safety factor if you have to get over. We have some shoulders and the like, but are we looking at having some of those significant drops in this proposed section of upgrade?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes, and I understand the drop will be 2:1 so, one metre in two metres length.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That is where it says 'and cut and fill batter slopes of one to two VH'. That is the reference there.

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes, that is vertical to horizontal.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I am no road engineer, just know what it looks like when its sitting right beside you. That drop is quite acceptable? Not necessarily from a community representative but from an engineering and meeting the road standard - is that drop acceptable?

**Mr BOURNE** - The design guidelines we work to, the AustRoad design guidelines, have certain safety treatments depending on the slope of the batter, the embankments, and also what hazards they find at the bottom of the batter. If it is going into water then that is a higher degree of risk than if it is just land.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Basin Creek bridge suggests a bit of water. Diana's Basin suggests a bit of water.

**Mr BOURNE** - But possibly not at the bottom of those slopes, but where there is there will be safety barriers.

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**CHAIR** - Any further questions under 2.1? Over the page under 2.1.1?

**Ms BUTLER** - I wanted to have a quick discussion about the impacts on sites of Aboriginal or European heritage significance. I want you to run us through, also for the record, about communication you may have had with a local Aboriginal community about their particular area and whether you might be able to provide some evidence to the committee about that communication.

**Mr CONFORTI** - We have not had any communication at this stage. It was described in one of the reports that there are known sites especially between Diana's Basin to St Helens. This project is using the existing alignment and we do not expect the margin of land we have to take will encounter relevant problems, but we will do the investigations and everything that is necessary, including communication to the communities as necessary.

**Ms BUTLER** - Heading south from St Helens, when you get to the bottom of the site closer to Diana's Basin itself, there is a water area, a lagoon area of sorts. It is my understanding that there could be some Aboriginal significance in that area.

**Ms CORDELL** - When we do our desktops at the high-level investigations, our environmental group does desk tops of all the environmental considerations and everything. They also write to the Aboriginal group to ask them if there is anything in particular we need to be aware of and they let us know. Like the instance you mention, they recommend that we have to do an in-field survey for any works to take place in that area, so that would all be covered. When any works do happen and have that unanticipated discovery, that kicks in if you find something and there is a process to follow if nobody was aware there was something there.

**CHAIR** - A corollary to that is, which group do you write to when you write?

**Ms CORDELL** - Yes, it is our environmental group.

**Mr BOURNE** - Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania.

**Ms BUTLER** - There are quite a few elders in the area, too. There can be breakdowns in communication between different groups. I would hate it to compromise any places of historical value or significance to the indigenous community.

**Ms CORDELL** - Absolutely.

**Ms RATTRAY** - In regard to threatened flora and fauna, what communication has there been with the local group, if you like, in this case the North East Bioregional Network, who have a really good understanding of the flora and fauna species in the area? Will there be some engagement?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Definitely, we will have a stakeholder list and they will definitely be involved in the process. Anyone who can lend their experience and knowledge, we make them fit.

**CHAIR** - Okay. It is a desktop that you have done at this stage with regard to impact on threatened flora and fauna species, but there will be further consultation with relevant groups as each of the projects take place.

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**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - How have you dealt with acceptance by landowners directly affected? Did you have one-on-one meetings with them? If it is desktop, that may not be the case. Is it simply that there aren't too many acquisitions? It is the first point; the key criteria used on the assessment and prioritisation of the turn treatments and pull-over bays included acceptance by landowners directly affected.

**Mr CONFORTI** - We had the conversation with the landowners where the access or junction -

**CHAIR** - For each of them?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes, to understand what they experience and what they think about undertaking an improvement in their particular area. We have feedback that is at least some of the feedback we had. After that, we also talked to the East Coast Regional Tourism Organisation. We substantiated that they might want to talk to their local councils as well, which gave us comments on the suggestions we had.

**CHAIR** - Did the councils have any public discussion on this?

**Mr CONFORTI** - We talked to the general managers only at this stage but there will be extensive stakeholder engagement and communication from now on.

**CHAIR** - Are you expecting you would be putting in development applications for each of these to the councils?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Not if it is not necessary. This is a safety project, which does not normally attract a development application. Depending on what we find on site and the extent of acquisitions, there may be some planning application that we have to go through, but it is not known at this stage.

**CHAIR** - You have had some communication with the North East Bioregional Network?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes, we had some communication for stage 1 of the project. They approached us to suggest some treatment of the batters. We will definitely involve them from the very beginning with the next phase. So we can take their suggestions on sealing or whatever the treatment is, understanding we have some limitations of budget and we have our own specifications that we need to take into consideration.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. We will be hearing from them later. They will be raising other things and you will have the opportunity to respond when we call you back to the table.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Are we calling these 'pull-over bays'? I took a trip to the west coast, somewhere I don't normally travel, completely out of my electorate and they are called 'turnouts'. I am confused. Are we turning out, are we pulling over, what are we doing? It would be really good if we had a consistent term, so that I have some idea in my mind as to what we are talking about.

**CHAIR** - Some people call them lay-bys.

**Ms CORDELL** - If they are labelled appropriately, pull-out bays are where the vehicle pulls out of the traffic and stop and allow the other vehicles to go past. Turnouts are very short overtaking

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opportunities. It would be something going very slow and the other vehicles try to get past within that short length.

**CHAIR** - A pull-out bay is for the purposes of relieving frustration, and looking at views and things like that.

**Ms RATTRAY** - They're not going to be like the west coast turnouts?

**Ms CORDELL** - No.

**Mr BOURNE** - I am not sure of the west coast turnouts but they are the terminologies -

**Ms RATTRAY** - There are a heap of them on the way, when you turn off at Burnie and head along the Murchison Highway. There is a heap of them down there.

**CHAIR** - The traffic keeps moving. They don't pull over and stop.

**Mr BOURNE** - In this case, it is more likely to be that they are pulling over and stopping so they can take a photo opportunity, for example. Whereas those on the Murchison Highway -

**Ms RATTRAY** - Are for slow-moving vehicles to get out of the way.

**CHAIR** - They turn out of the main traffic line and keep going, if they are going slower.

**Mr BOURNE** - There are a lot more heavy-moving vehicle movements on the Murchison Highway than here.

**CHAIR** - A pull-over or a lay-by, as some people call them, are the same thing.

**Mr CONFORTI** - They are usually indicated, so there is a sign.

**Ms RATTRAY** - These won't be signed. There will be no signage.

**Mr CONFORTI** - I am not sure at this stage. It depends, I think there will be some sign on the approach.

**Ms CORDELL** - I will get clarification on the pull-out, where you stop, as to whether it is desired to be for any other purpose or purely for a short-time pull out and then pull back in. If you are turning it into something else, there may be no opportunity for it to be used for its initial purpose.

**CHAIR** - We need a standardisation of terminology. That would help because some people call them lay-bys, where you pull over and stop and take your photos.

**Ms CORDELL** - That is different to this. I think the pull-outs wouldn't involve this.

**CHAIR** - Can you explain what a vertical curve is? Under 2.2 Design Speed -

There are a number of sections where the existing horizontal geometry does not meet the design guidelines for a 100 kilometre an hour speed environment. For example, there are a number of locations where horizontal and vertical curves -

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**Mr CONFORTI** - A horizontal curve can be a safety issue, while normally the vertical curve is -

**CHAIR** - Oh, it dips.

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes. When you go up, that can reduce the site distance, so you do not see what is on the other side of the vertical curve.

**CHAIR** - No, that is okay. I thought you were talking about camber, a different term.

**Mr CONFORTI** - When there is a vertical curve the opposite way, it is the discomfort for the driver and is not considered essential.

**CHAIR** - I understand entirely, it is just a misunderstanding on my part. Anything else on that page? Nothing under 2.4?

**Ms BUTLER** - I wanted to note for the record the area at the bottom part, heading south of Diana's Basin, there is no phone coverage there. It's a black spot.

**CHAIR** - I do not think they -

**Ms BUTLER** - Just for the record. We would like to see that fixed one day but has been like that for as long as I can remember.

**CHAIR** - That is a Telstra issue.

**Ms RATTRAY** - There is not even very good radio coverage, let alone mobile phones. Anyway, it's a good idea to get it on paper.

**Mr CONFORTI** - It could actually be an issue for the contractor working in that area. In case of an emergency, they may have to make a phone call.

**CHAIR** - Nothing under 2.4. Now, 3 - social and environmental impacts and stakeholder engagement?

**Ms RATTRAY** - Is there any property acquisition required?

**CHAIR** - I expect there will be, according to this.

**Mr CONFORTI** - It is an unknown at this stage because the concept design did not go to the extent of designing the actual alignment. It is expected to keep in the existing road reserve as much as we can, but some acquisition may be required. We do not actually know at this stage.

**CHAIR** - I have a question under 3.3, the second last paragraph, the last sentence says -

The full extent of the potential impact and implications for these threatened species will be determined during the next design stage.

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What is likely to be your process if you find a threatened species? How are you going to handle that? Obviously, we do not have the report in front of us because it has not gone to tender yet and we don't know what we don't know. Can you, for the record, give us an understanding as to how you are going to handle the threatened species or fauna?

**Mr CONFORTI** - We may be able to talk about past experience if there is a threatened species. We try to avoid flora, fauna and heritage altogether.

**Mr BOURNE** - Slight design changes may be enough to change the alignment and avoid the specific threatened flora, but not always.

**CHAIR** - Do you ever transplant flora to other locations if it is a really threatened species?

**Mr BOURNE** - Not usually transplant, but sometimes offset. It really depends on the particular species, where they are and how easy it is to re-establish. We would be led by the specialist in those areas, depending on exactly what species we are talking about.

**CHAIR** - I ask that question because, quite clearly, it is something you do not know until you do the full on-ground assessment. That is the difficulty with the way these reports are coming through. We can talk about that later, I guess.

**Mr BOURNE** - I will also add there is a regulatory approval from DPIPWE for any impacts on threatened flora and fauna, so we have to go through it and will be led by their approval.

**Ms RATTRAY** - We have also been advised that it is a conservation area on the eastern side of the road. Is that an additional consideration? I expect it would be.

**Ms CORDELL** - Yes, it would be. When you are doing this study all these areas are highlighted. Then you try to do your alignment through there to do the least impact. Then if there is any impact, as Kevin said, there is a process you follow with all the statutory approvals. We try to minimise.

**Ms BUTLER** - That area at Diana's Basin is a high roadkill hotspot with the existing set up. Is there any obligation in your design or strategies in place to try to minimise roadkill? There are always dead animals there.

**Ms CORDELL** - The scope with the dollars and what we want to get out of this project has been adjusted. Although it is from Diana's Basin to St Helens, the first part will start from Basin Creek Road and go to St Helens. That bit from Basin Creek Road back to Diana's Basin will be done at a later stage. All those sorts of things would be factored in. If there is anything we can do to minimise impacts on animal life, then we definitely would be looking at it. I know we have trialled things in other areas.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Can I clarify a 'later stage'. I thought the whole reason for putting it together was that it would be done under the one tender and therefore there would be some cost efficiencies. Did I misunderstand that?

**Ms CORDELL** - No.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - The Diana's Basin tender does not go out until May next year.

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**Ms RATTRAY** - Yes, but the works will be undertaken in the one stage.

**Mr BOURNE** - It is the extent of the works. The extent of the works within that \$8.3 million is for so far. Then, at a future stage, with totally different funding at some point in the future, if it is made available, there will be further work in that area, beyond that area.

**Ms RATTRAY** - But the one that we are talking about now, that section will be completed under one tender?

**Mr BOURNE** - Yes.

**Ms CORDELL** - Not that. Basin Creek Road to Diana's Basin will be in the future.

**Mr BOURNE** - That will be a future project but Basin Creek Road to St Helens is the bit -

**Ms CORDELL** - It's the bit that is going in the tender with the others. There will be a gap there. It is going to be longer than that because the works you are doing are more a junction access one.

**Mr CONFORTI** - Ms Rattray, there is a picture in the presentation that we discussed that shows the section of the road where we are working on. The bottom end in Diana's Basin was taken into consideration in the option assessment. All the preferred options are in the north.

**Ms RATTRAY** - In the northern one.

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes.

**Ms RATTRAY** - So those two will be done together.

**CHAIR** - And that does not include Scamander to Diana's Basin, does it?

**Mr CONFORTI** - No.

**Ms BUTLER** - Just quickly, does the department have a policy for programs to reduce roadkill? There are lots of different ideas but is there a national policy in construction of new roads?

**Mr BOURNE** - I am not aware of any. Are you aware of any, Helen?

**Ms CORDELL** - Can I take that on notice? I know that they are trialling all sorts of things. They have been looking at roadkill in all areas. I would have to find out for you.

**Mr BOURNE** - It might be that it is happening but we do not have a policy yet. We will take it on notice.

**Ms RATTRAY** - The government has a policy to install electronic ShuRoos are on members' cars that service those areas. I get one on every car. You cannot guarantee them but they do help.

**Mr CONFORTI** - If a reduction in speed from Basin Creek to St Helens goes ahead from 100 to 80 kilometres an hour, that would make a dramatic change.

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**Ms BUTLER** - Sometimes the wildlife, especially at certain times of the year, is so dramatic that they will bounce into your car as you are going past. You can slow down, you can be doing 5 kilometres an hour. That is how prolific the wildlife is in the area.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Stefano, you have already told me that I can't do 100 kilometres an hour through there because it is not safe. So nobody is doing 100.

**CHAIR** - So nothing else on 3.1 to 3.5? Okay. So 3.6 down to 3.8 inclusive?

**Ms RATTRAY** - In 3.8, the one-on-one meetings with adjacent landowners. That will be undertaken by a community consultation engagement officer, is that correct?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes.

**Ms CORDELL** - Consultants do that, don't they?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes.

**Ms CORDELL** - They put together a SCEP - a stakeholder community engagement plan, is put together for every project we do. All of that will be detailed in there, showing exactly how we will approach each project. They all vary depending on the type of project that is rolling out.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Do we know how many adjacent landowners we are likely to be having engagement with through this, or not yet?

**Mr CONFORTI** - We will have a direct contact with all of those impacted. So, we will be looking for them to talk to. I am not quite sure at this stage how we will spread the message around the community, but it will probably be a series of initiatives.

**Ms RATTRAY** - From previous experience, the community engagement was not so good on the Lovely Banks upgrade on the Midland Highway. That's a heads up that one did not quite work. Some people there know we have to improve.

**Mr BOURNE** - I mentioned in our earlier session that the department launched a stakeholder engagement framework at the start of the year, so I think we are doing better than we have in the past.

**CHAIR** - You talk about Social Pinpoint, which is an online engagement platform. It was utilised to obtain feedback, ideas and concerns from the wider community along the Great Eastern Drive Road corridor. Can you tell us how many users commented? Do we have any understanding there of use of that website?

**Mr CONFORTI** - I can't recall but it could have some information.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Be mindful that we do not have very good NBN connection down here, do we?

**Mr CONFORTI** - I will look for the information, I think I read it somewhere.

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**CHAIR** - I want to get an idea of whether it was one, two or 200 people. How many comments were received? Moving on to 3.9.

**Ms RATTRAY** - There is a reference to 'Parks and Wildlife Services are likely to require reserve activity assessment'. We know that Parks and Wildlife Services are somewhat under-resourced. I am interested in how working together with PWS is going to occur. Is there someone directly in PWS who deals with these issues? Or do you contact a different person every time, then it goes around in circles, as I sometimes have to do?

**Mr BOURNE** - I don't think we have a dedicated contact. It is something that we know takes a long time. We factor that into our program and commence it as soon as possible, and manage the process as much as possible. It does say 'any work proposed on areas that are managed by Parks and Wildlife', so if we can minimise that then we will try to avoid that if possible.

**Ms RATTRAY** - They now have such a lot of area to oversee that they seem to be under the pump.

**Mr BOURNE** - We know that the reserve activity assessment does not have any statutory time frames like development applications. We are a little bit hamstrung by that.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Send an email to the minister. They will get some time frames.

**CHAIR** - Any further questions under 3.9? The second last paragraph it has 6.2.3 listed twice. I am assuming that one of them is 6.2.4?

**Mr BOURNE** - It could be a typo, I'm not sure.

**CHAIR** - It says -

Where the proposed works are widening only, such as cross-section improvements, shoulder widening and turning treatments, it is expected that they will meet 'Limited Exemption' under clauses 6.2.3. and 6.2.3 ...

**Mr BOURNE** - Where is that?

**CHAIR** - This is at 3.9 - Development Approvals, second last paragraph.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Page numbers are always handy.

**CHAIR** - Yes, they are. They can help.

**Mr BOURNE** - It is '6.2.3 of the above planning schemes ...'

**CHAIR** - Yes, but it says 'and another' -

**Mr BOURNE** - Yes. There is an error there in that two numbers are the same. I'm not sure what the right number should be.

**CHAIR** - Should it only be one, should it?

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**Mr BOURNE** - Or another reference. I'm not sure what the right one is.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Unless it means it's 6.2.3 under the Break O'Day Planning Scheme and 6.2.3 under the Glamorgan Spring Bay Planning Scheme. I'm not sure if it's the same. There are two planning schemes mentioned in paragraph 1.

**CHAIR** - It is of no great importance, that we know of, perhaps only a typo?

**Mr BOURNE** - A typo on the number, yes.

**CHAIR** - I will take that as given. Chapter 4, project program and costs.

The key assumptions of the project schedule developed for the Great Eastern Drive projects include:

- Any required Development Applications are accepted by the Break O'Day Council and/or Glamorgan Spring Bay Council without any major representations or onerous conditions imposed.

The word 'major' is always a point of contention. Someone's representation, as small as it might be, might be a significant issue for them. Do you have any metrics you place around these things to know what a 'major representation' is?

**Ms BUTLER** - This infers that there could be 'minor' issues.

**Mr BOURNE** - This isn't saying that there won't be representations and they won't be managed. It is saying that we have assumed there will not be any major issues to come up in the project schedule so we have to delay things.

**CHAIR** - I was wondering who decides what is 'major'. It is a bit -

**Mr BOURNE** - It is based on typical time frames for dealing with representations that don't fundamentally change the process.

**CHAIR** - That's fair.

**Mr CONFORTI** - Is it okay if I go back to the question because I've been looking for it for the last 20 minutes.

**CHAIR** - Yes, on the Social Pinpoint question.

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes. We have a consultation and feedback report dated July 2019 and at that stage we had 91 comments on Social Pinpoint, just referring to the project with the 30 sites.

**CHAIR** - Do you have any understanding of how many people were involved in those 91 comments? It's not one person that's frenetic?

**Mr CONFORTI** - One person had 28 comments and the total people involved in the discussion was 44. There were also 48 comments on Facebook.

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**CHAIR** - That gives me an understanding. I wanted to know how much interest there was and how many people were involved. Thank you for that.

**Mr BOURNE** - They can be positive and negative comments; they are not all negative.

**CHAIR** - Do you want to go down a bit further and tell me how many of them were very negative? Or negative compared to positive? Were there any positive? They may have all been negative. Is there an indication of that? It's a good point.

**Mr CONFORTI** - No, there is no indication. There is the indication of the area discussed but it doesn't seem to talk about positive or negative. It may be neutral as well, I suppose.

**CHAIR** - As long as that information was used to inform you, that is the important thing.

**Mr CONFORTI** - Definitely, yes.

**CHAIR** - As to whether they were dire issues or problems is another thing, and you would have taken that into account if there were. I can only assume.

**Mr CONFORTI** - I can give you a summary. There were some interesting points: maintain the natural aesthetic value; more better pullover areas; request for speed limit reduction - those were the themes - timing disruption of roadworks; cycling and motorbikes; improved signage; design for locals, not just tourists; please don't use wire barriers, 'cheese cutters', which are dangerous for motorcyclists -

**CHAIR** - I was going to say, they would be motorcyclists.

**Mr CONFORTI** - Do you know about them?

**CHAIR** - Yes, I certainly do. Being a motorcyclist, I declare an interest.

**Mr CONFORTI** - Then there are the comments that don't fall into other categories.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. At 4.3 Risk Assessment, there are risk events you have listed in Table 4: Identified Risks and Mitigation Strategies. Which of those events have come to pass? Have any of those risks listed been identified in this project, up to this stage?

**Mr CONFORTI** - This is what has been looked at, at this stage. The risk assessment is definitely updated as the project progresses. We may mitigate some of these risks and others will be added -

**CHAIR** - It is in here to give us an understanding of the type of risks you are looking at to date?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes, to the point of progress of the work so far.

**Mr BOURNE** - It also forms a basis for the contingency costs that we put into the project, so if these things happen -

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**CHAIR** - If we take the first one, 'Unforeseen ground condition, latent condition or landslip', one of the mitigation strategies is listed as, 'Undertake landslip risk assessments, as required'. Have there been any assessment on landslips?

**Mr CONFORTI** - No, so far it has taken into consideration the information that is available in the area.

**Mr BOURNE** - It's desktop information.

**CHAIR** - It is desktop information. So you haven't identified anything in relation to landslips?

**Mr CONFORTI** - No, but there will be more done specific to the locations where we are going to do work.

**CHAIR** - Yes, that would certainly impact on your costings.

**Ms CORDELL** - Yes, that they have done that on the Diana's Basin to St Helens section. There is an area of potential landslip but, until you go in and have a look, it is all identified as high-level. As Mr Bourne said, that would be a contingency factor.

**Mr BOURKE** - As we develop and we do those investigations on ground, we can then reduce that component of the contingency.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Anything else on that table?

**Ms BUTLER** - You have listed a Risk Event, 'Unexpected impact on Services', and one of the mitigation strategies includes, 'On-site location and potholing of affected and nearby services to be undertaken after the Concept Design phase.'

**Mr CONFORTI** - At this stage, we know there are just Telstra communication services underground. From memory, it is on the west side of the alignment, so you use the Dial Before You Dig service. The information that is available on the web, and they will use some electronic device to find the depth of the services. If there is uncertainty, even during the works, I understand they do potholing to spot exactly where the cable is to avoid damage or safety risks.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I have a question in regard to the list and then a couple of subsequent questions. On the 1 to 30 list, Rocky Hills is there three times. It looks like a bit of duplication, so tell me if it is not. There is formalise gravel pull over area and allow passing of slow vehicles and promote scenic views, and then you have Rocky Hills large car park -

**CHAIR** - What number?

**Ms RATTRAY** - You have 1 and 29 and 30. There is a Rocky Hills pullover area, reconstruct pavement and seal pullover area. When it is all the one thing why would there be three different identified works?

**Mr BOURNE** - These are in priority order. The first one is a high priority, and then the carpark works are lower down the priority list.

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**CHAIR** - Does this mean when you look at cutting back the projects if you have one that blows out or need to stick within budget, you might be taking 29 and 30 off, but retaining number 1?

**Mr BOURNE** - That is possible.

**Mr CONFORTI** - That is a possibility but as we are continuously updating this list it could be that 29 takes the place of something else a bit above that for some reason. I am just speculating here a landowner does not want to see that work done and it may go down the priority. Those priorities are there at this stage.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I would have thought for economies of scale and economics it would pay to do all of the Rocky Hills work in one project. Having a couple stuck down the bottom in case we have some money and we will come back does not seem to be efficient. That is my common-sense approach.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - They look like they are in two different areas though. If you look on the pictures, they are in two totally different areas.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That could well be the answer, but to me it looks like similar work on Rocky Hills.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - They are different areas, one is at Mayfield Beach and one is different -

**Mr BOURNE** - If we are running short on funding and need to decide which one not to do I would think we would want to drop off ones not a high priority, rather than do the ones close together because of economies of scale, if they are not a high priority.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That is fine; just asking the question. I am surprised the three at Kelvedon Beach are even on a list like this when it should be a general case of maintenance. Maybe, there is going to be some more work. I have been bashing on about the Kelvedon beach improvement of sight lines for as long as I was the member and it was always just on the works list. So, is it significant work that is going to be undertaken there for better sight? Is it just general vegetation cut back or what?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - There are pictures again in here.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Yes, but there is only one Kelvedon Beach carpark that I am aware of.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It is different on the map.

**Mr CONFORTI** - I have the report here and the locations of the two seems to be quite far away. One seems to be just a problem of sight distance and some vegetation because there is a plan going up north on the right and some vegetation might be on the site. While the beach turn treatment -

**Ms RATTRAY** - The three on the list is just 'clearing to improve sight lines -

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes, that is the one I am trying to describe.

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**Ms RATTRAY** - Then there is another one - number four which is formalise the car park which is fine. But, I would have thought 'vegetation clearing to improve sight; is a matter of course. It should not necessarily need an entire project to do it.

**Mr CONFORTI** - I can see what is described here at this stage, but it maybe that we have to see whether any of those trees are protected species. To be honest, I do not know. There is obviously a bit more than what I can describe now.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Okay then. The works on Coles Bay Road, so is that part of the Great Eastern Drive?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes, that is part of stage 2. We are about to implement that one. It is about to be awarded. It is stage 2 of the previous package of works and will be implemented this summer. Is it in the list?

**Ms RATTRAY** - But it is on the list of 30?

**Mr BOURNE** - Is it number 11 - is that what you are looking at?

**Ms RATTRAY** - Yes.

**Mr CONFORTI** - That is Freycinet Marine Farm. It is different from the Coles Bay intersection. Sorry, I misunderstood. We are working on the Coles Bay intersection.

**Ms RATTRAY** - No, I realise Coles Bay intersection is on the Great Eastern Drive. I understand that. Is the Coles Bay Road and Swanport part of the Great Eastern Drive, that road because this is actually on the road into Coles Bay?

**Mr CONFORTI** - It is.

**CHAIR** - But it is not in our report, is it?

**Ms RATTRAY** - It is on the list.

**Mr CONFORTI** - It is on the list, yes. It is on Coles Bay Road.

**Ms RATTRAY** - So that is part of the Great Eastern Drive upgrade. Is that correct?

**Mr CONFORTI** - At this stage.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Or is this just about the East Coast tourism wish list? That is the question I am asking.

**Ms BUTTLER** - Which one are you looking at? Is it the Frog?

**Ms RATTRAY** - No, no. Pondering Frog is definitely on the Great Eastern Drive. I have stopped there and had icecream.

**Mr CONFORTI** - Tania is right. This one is on Coles Bay Road rather than the Tasman Highway, so it must have been highlighted by East Coast Tourism.

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**Ms RATTRAY** - But I am asking is that part of the Great Eastern Drive?

**Mr CONFORTI** - At this stage, yes.

**Ms RATTRAY** - That is fine. That is what I am asking. Then the Salt Works Road, Little Swanport is the same. That is fine.

What visitor numbers to those places were used to decide who made the list out of the 67? My understanding is that it is about visitor numbers whether you get an upgrade or not into your facility. What sort of numbers were assessed to have this list as priority.

**Mr CONFORTI** - I do not have the number of visitors in the reports in front of me at this stage, but we also said the decision-making is not just based on visitors.

**Ms RATTRAY** - No, but I would expect it would be a significant part of the assessment?

**Mr BOURNE** - We would not expect it if one visitor goes in, in a year. It would factor, but it is not the only thing.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I would not expect a business would be still operating if you had one visitor a year.

**Mr BOURNE** - I was exaggerating. One a day.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Is this something that can be taken on notice? What numbers were looked at for this assessment?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes, I suppose we can.

**Ms CORDELL** - I would have thought a bigger factor would be safety at each of those junctions. Numbers would be a part, but safety would be subject. As Kevin said it is a combination of things. You cannot have one by itself.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Maybe, because I have a significant issue in another part of my electorate and was told you need to get the numbers up to be able to access the safety issue. I am looking to see what was behind the rationale here so I can present that at a later time. I need to have that understanding.

**CHAIR** - A similar thing might be the Mt Elephant Pancakes intersection, Elephant Pass Road.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Do you realise how many people go to the Pancake Parlour?

**CHAIR** - It says the turn off to Mt Elephant Pancakes is sealed and surrounded by substandard geometry, all the speed environment is relatively low.'

**Ms RATTRAY** - That's not on that list.

**CHAIR** - No, it's not on the list.

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**Mr CONFORTI** - I suppose that when they do a risk assessment they don't just look at the possibility of numbers, but also the consequences. Maybe if they have just three visitors per year but those three visitors have a very high risk to die when they come to that intersection, then they will probably take a priority on a less dangerous junction.

**Mr BOURNE** - A more frequently used junction.

**CHAIR** - Lake Leake Highway would be pretty frequent, but that hasn't made the list either.

**Ms RATTRAY** - It's not on the Great Eastern Drive.

**CHAIR** - Well, it is.

**Ms RATTRAY** - No, it isn't.

**CHAIR** - It doesn't come far enough south.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Well it does, but you don't go across the Great Eastern at Lake Leake. You go straight down, like to Orford, you go down.

**CHAIR** - Sorry, yes. Well, it is an intersection. A lot of motorcycles use it. Anything else?

**Ms RATTRAY** - In regard to the quality of works, we received some information regarding the Four Mile Creek where it formalised the gravel pull-over area, which is number 12 on the list. There has been some criticism about the quality of works undertaken. I want to be assured the quality of works is up to Austroads standard. The Parliament of Tasmania would be keen to have a standard that will be met with all these works and we won't see feedback like we have received. Can we have some undertaking or commitment?

**Mr CONFORTI** - It is definitely designed by the standards, but the comments you are talking about probably didn't rely on standards of the design, it was possibly more the landscaping.

**Ms RATTRAY** - It was to do with PWS, which is an issue I have already spoken about, as to whether some other department is resourced well enough to undertake the works that possibly didn't meet community expectation in this case. I'm sure it didn't, one comment was 'appalling'.

**CHAIR** - We will call you back after we have presentations from other witnesses. You might care to listen carefully and there might be questions we need to ask. Thank you.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**

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**Mr TODD DUDLEY**, PRESIDENT, NORTH EAST BIOREGIONAL NETWORK INC., WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** - Welcome, thank you for appearing today.

I wanted to inform you it is important to make sure that you aware that before you given evidence, some of the important aspects of committee proceedings.

First of all, it is a committee hearing and it is a proceeding of parliament. It means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege. As an important legal protection, it 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, and it applies to ensure the parliament receives the very best information in conducting its inquiries.

It is important to be aware this protection is not afforded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside the confines of the parliamentary proceedings.

As you would have heard previously, it is a public hearing, and members of the public and journalists may be present and this means your evidence may be reported. Do you understand that?

**Mr DUDLEY** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - You have an opportunity to make an opening statement and you can include in that whatever you wish, if there are any statements you may wish to make in relation to what you have already heard, it is over to you, and then members will ask you questions about your particular submission.

**Mr DUDLEY** - Yes, I did want to make a few comments about some of the questions and answers asked before, but first of all I will introduce myself: Todd Dudley, president of the North East Bioregional Network Inc. I have 35 years' experience in conservation and land management working in rehabilitation and all the different aspects of environmental law, environmental education. I like to think I am reasonably well qualified to comment on land management issues in relation to roadside vegetation management, any type of land use really.

I would like to make a few comments about the discussions held previously. On Tania's point about the curve realignment, my property has had in the last two years three cars go over the bank and into our revegetating area. That is a particularly sharp corner where -

**CHAIR** - For the record, can you describe where this property is?

**Mr DUDLEY** - My address is 24751 Tasman Highway. Close to the southern boundary of our block, it is quite a regular occurrence for cars to go over the side of the embankment and down into our land and be towed out by the local RACT person.

**CHAIR** - That is near one of the projects being considered?

**Mr DUDLEY** - It is in the middle of the Diana's Basin area.

A curve realignment in that area would actually be a very good idea. It mainly occurs because it is a really sharp corner and especially quite slippery in the winter time. Doing works there would

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not cause too much environmental impact because the curve coincides with an area with a whole heap of very large, dead pine trees on it, which are a really major safety concern as well. We might deal with two problems in the one, but it does not sound like that is going to be addressed in the works proposed. Maybe, that might be a lost opportunity.

The other thing which Tania raised is about Parks and Wildlife. We have concerns about the fact that quite often it seems Parks and Wildlife is being sidelined a bit in some of these processes, even when it is on their own land. When you are talking about them being able to provide some money to help with any land management, they do not have any money because nearly all of it is being used for tourism infrastructure upgrades, rather than for doing things like rehabilitation, weed or feral animal control. That is a real concern. The budget has been cut back year after year for quite a long time now.

**Ms RATTRAY** - And given more responsibility.

**Mr DUDLEY** - Yes, large areas of land with less on it is a real concern.

On your issues, Rob, about the bicycle access, I think what Helen was talking about was mountain bikes, which is obviously completely different from road bikes. Those pathways or tracks that are being constructed from St Helens parallel to the highway are only for mountain bikes and not the road bicycles. They are two different uses.

On the issue of consultation, just consulting with the East Coast Regional Tourism Organisation or the council is not community consultation.

**CHAIR** - I think you mentioned that in your -

**Mr DUDLEY** - I will revisit that, but you mentioned consultation. It does seem that the East Coast Regional Tourism Organisation has a fairly significant influence, considering the size of the organisation. It is of some concern to us.

Also with consultation about the overtaking lanes between Diana's Basin and St Helens, it would be reasonable to consult with all the landowners in that area because there is not a huge number of titles through there. It is fairly sparsely populated. Most of the landowners along there would want to know about plans for overtaking lanes and road widening before the roadworks machinery turns up, which may well be what happens otherwise. It may well impact on their properties in some indifferent ways. For some people it might be their accesses. One of our main concerns is the roadside vegetation, which we have maintained for the last 25 years or more. We have picked weeds out, picked up rubbish and all those kinds of things.

You mentioned offsets and permits to destroy from DPIPWE. Our experience is that it is very rare with roadside works these days that there are offsets associated with it, even when there probably should be. Some of those offsets might not necessarily be related to protecting other bits of vegetation. They might also include providing funding to the proper rehabilitation of sites and even re-establish threatened species in areas where they are potentially going to be lost, which is feasible in some cases if there are grasses, for example. Our experience is that getting permits to destroy threatened species is pretty easy and there doesn't seem to be a threshold with a lot of species in terms of how many can be taken from a site. It seems, with a lot of species, that permits are issued continually. The whole point of having the Threatened Species Act is to maintain or

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hopefully improve the status of threatened species. Issuing permits to destroy all the time can only mean one thing, and that means that their status is becoming more in peril.

Aligned with that is that there are a few consultancies, such as ECOTas and North Barker Ecosystem Services, which do the vast majority of surveys for these kinds of larger public works and larger developments on private land. There is a tendency with their reports not to recommend offsets either. That gives the department a bit of an out as well. There should be more requirements for offsets and closer scrutiny of permits to destroy threatened species.

Ms Butler mentioned Aboriginal heritage issues. My experience is that Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania is very lax in terms of their assessment of Aboriginal heritage values. I can think of four developments in the last few years around the St Helens area where there has clearly been Aboriginal heritage values on the site and Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania has recommended that no survey is required. And that is for sites that are on the coast, close to fresh water and where there is significant bush tucker and marine resources available. I have written to the minister about that and they haven't taken any action on it. Simply doing a desk top analysis and saying that no survey is required in areas where there are clearly potential issues is not adequate.

Also on Ms Butler's point about roadkill in wildlife corridors, as there is an increase in the amount of traffic and road use in Tasmania, it is becoming more important to start developing overlays for important wildlife corridor areas so that it is considered in road design. In other states, where there are larger populations, they do a lot of work on trying to maintain avenues for wildlife to cross roads, whether it is underneath roads or over the top of them. In Tasmania we haven't worried about it too much because we have not had as high volumes of traffic. If that continues to trend the way it is at the moment, we need to take that into account. They are a few comments related to the issues that were brought up in discussion.

**CHAIR** - Do you want to address your submission?

**Mr DUDLEY** - Yes. I sent a few different lots of emails to Scott. The first one I sent was that the process of accessing information and engaging the process is fairly cumbersome. Most people probably wouldn't bother because they have to go through a few different processes. First of all they haven't been aware that the ad is there, then having to contact the department for information and having to write a cover letter with a submission, et cetera. From my point of view, it would be good if the information was much more easily available and accessible for people so they could find out, without too much trouble, exactly what was being proposed and where, which would make it easier for them to make a submission. As I said before, if it is something that potentially physically affects a landowner, then some more direct contact with them would be good, rather than just saying, 'oh well, we had it in the public notices and you should have seen it'.

**CHAIR** - I think they did say they did talk to the individual landowners that would be affected, they are here today.

**Mr DUDLEY** - That might have been related to pull-off areas. I am thinking more about the area between Diana's Basin and St Helens where you have road-widening and overtaking lanes proposed. That is quite a significant change.

I wanted to raise the issue that the East Coast Regional Tourism Organisation seems to have a disproportionate influence on how the areas are prioritised and what is supported or not supported.

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**CHAIR** - In this case, to be fair, it is largely a tourism-based project, with the amount of money that is being allocated here as an election promise. I am not trying to defend the Government. I am saying that is the nature of what the project is about and possibly why it might appear like that. I will let the department answer that when I ask that question again, as to the proportionality of their input.

**Mr DUDLEY** - I did ask their contractor once about the Four Mile Creek carpark. I asked if I should ring Parks and Wildlife about that because it is on Parks land and he said, 'no, you should be contacting East Coast Tourism about it'. I thought that was an interesting answer.

I mentioned previous works and I understand that is not within your remit but it is worth raising a few issues for future reference. From our point of view, some of the areas that were selected for works were really hard to justify. As I said, the Beaumaris Beach access would have to be the least used beach access in the entire Break O'Day municipality. Everybody I have spoken to about that is struggling to understand why that was prioritised, just as an example. I will raise those other issues there, they are different issues I have raised so that when future works are discussed and prioritised, you are made aware that there might be ways of improving the standards and prioritisation.

**CHAIR** - I am sure they are listening.

**Mr DUDLEY** - Yes. My background is in conservation and land management. I am pretty frustrated that in Tasmania, from my point of view, the roadside vegetation management has probably gone backward in the last 20 years. There was significantly greater importance placed on it and resourcing allocated for it quite a while ago than there is now. It seems that over time road construction has become just an engineering and construction focus and the environmental aspects of it have gradually slipped off the back of the truck, so to speak.

It is important, especially with the Great Eastern Drive, in that the concept of it is supposed to be showcasing natural beauty and attractions. Part of that isn't just what you are looking at, it is also having good standards of land management, too, because that is part of the whole process. You should have high standards of revegetation and, as much possible, avoid impacting on areas that have significant natural values because that is what it is supposed to be all about.

I brought this book along, which was written 25 years ago, on best practice roadside vegetation, which I sent an extract of in an email. I can pass it over, if you like. It has all the practical, obvious steps that anybody should take when they are doing roadside vegetation management but it doesn't seem that it is occurring a lot of the time any more. One recommendation we are making is that there should be a code of practice, or a basic book like that, that is available to all, whether it is onground workers, managers or contractors. In a lot of cases, those basic principles aren't being followed at the moment. There seems to be a lack of awareness of them.

**CHAIR** - So, that's VicRoads.

**Mr DUDLEY** - Yes. There's one extract from it. It's not that complicated, it's all fairly commonsense but it is not always happening, unfortunately.

I will not go through all the different recommendations. One thing of particular note, I am mainly referring to roadsides that have reasonable natural values. The importance of stripping topsoil and reusing it for revegetation is really important because it's the most efficient way to

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stabilise and revegetate areas and it's also the cheapest. Rather than doing a lot of planting, you can just respread topsoil. It's got a seed bank in it and it will regrow on the site. It is a sensible thing to do from a value-for-money point of view as much as anything else.

I will talk a bit about the overtaking lane. I sent a document highlighting a few values. It is also worth noting, which I didn't mention in my submission, that there was a program about 15 or 20 years ago. The roads department put up black and yellow arrows indicating threatened species around the state but I understand that program has gradually been wound back over the years and some of it is not really taken into account anymore. That would be another database that could be accessed for threatened species in Diana's Basin to St Helens Point Road area because a few of those signs are still there, even if they are not taken into account anymore.

**CHAIR** - Can you clarify the black and yellow arrows? Are you saying these are permanent things?

**Mr DUDLEY** - Yes, they're permanent signs. I can't remember exactly how many years ago - something like 15 or 20 years ago - the Department of Transport allocated quite a lot of money to survey roadsides around the state. They put up yellow posts with black arrows pointing on them and they indicated areas of roadside that had conservation significance, mainly threatened species. My understanding is that the Department of Transport has wiped about two-thirds of those areas in recent years because they deem it inefficient in terms of their budget. That is just another indication of the fact that environmental issues have been downgraded in recent times. The reason I know that is because it was mentioned at a roadside vegetation forum that we ran in Campbell Town a few years ago.

The main one I am a bit concerned about is the northbound proposal which is referred to as T4. With all of those things, a significant cost is involved in this case. The overtaking lane is only about three kilometres from St Helens. If you combine the fact that it is short distance from St Helens, you have a reduction in the speed limit from 100 kilometres to 80 kilometres an hour. Also, a mountain bike access is proposed at the intersection of St Helens Point Road and Tasman Highway. That will require reducing the speed limit further south on the Tasman Highway to make that a safe crossing point.

I can't imagine that they are going to have hordes of people going across there. They are going to have 60 kilometres an hour speed limit there. I don't think it will be safe. I am just questioning whether that is really good value for money to build an overtaking lane which is so close to St Helens. It doesn't seem like it is really going to take much time off people's travel time - a few seconds maybe, but is that worth a million dollars or however much it is going to cost?

**CHAIR** - That's the northbound overtaking lane.

**Mr DUDLEY** - Yes, I also mentioned that. In the proposed area if you are heading north on the left-hand side of the road or the western side of the road, there is an avenue of some really quite large eucalypts which is parrot habitat

**Ms RATTRAY** - You gave us photos of that.

**Mr DUDLEY** - Our first recommendation is that it shouldn't really proceed. If it does, then at least the widening should be on the other side of the road so those large trees don't have to be removed.

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**Ms RATTRAY** - Would there be any cause for concern around the age of those trees and their falling? A bit later on you have to take them out anyway.

**Mr DUDLEY** - No, they are still pretty healthy. I think there's a long time before they get to that stage. Some of them occasionally need maintenance pruning or the removal of the odd branch but they are in good health. I don't see them having to be removed anytime soon, unlike just up the road a little bit further where there are large dead pine trees, which are a hazard.

**CHAIR** - Can you clarify where the widening is you are talking about?

**Mr DUDLEY** - This is the northbound overtaking lane. It would probably be helpful if I could refer to a map. I guess it is pretty obvious there are two southbound lanes and only one northbound lane. As far as the other two, the southbound ones, we have suggested rather than having two separate southbound ones you combine them into one longer overtaking lane.

**Ms RATTRAY** - T7 and T5?

**Mr DUDLEY** - Yes. The one that is the closest to St Helens will require a massive amount of earth-moving to build it. So, if you went further up the road and combined the existing one with the -

**Ms RATTRAY** - Or extended it.

**Mr DUDLEY** - Yes, it wouldn't require anywhere as much earth-moving because the shoulder there is only fairly small. At the St Helens end it would require a huge amount more work to establish the extra room for overtaking lane.

**Ms RATTRAY** - So extend T5 and don't do T7.

**Mr DUDLEY** - Yes, I also thought that as the intersection at St Helens Point Road and Tasman Highway is going to get much more congested, it might be better if it is a traffic calming place rather than an overtaking area. The overtaking lane might be in the other direction but we all know what people do if there is an extra lane. I was driving up there only last night and somebody overtook on double lines going the other way.

**Ms BUTLER** - The yahoos that come in around Christmas time too just don't know the road very well.

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

I do not have much more to talk about. I was not clear about the road widening if that applies to the whole area from Diana's Basin through to St Helens or just part of it.

**CHAIR** - We will ask them on your behalf. The question was?

**Mr DUDLEY** - If the proposed road widening is for the whole length from Basin Creek Road right through to St Helens? I was not sure about that. The main comment we had was if it was the case, you should prioritise more degraded or cleared areas over the more vegetated areas. Onto the pull overs for views issue -

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**Ms RATTRAY** - That is an interesting point you made there, it creates more sites to dump.

**Mr DUDLEY** - It is an issue that needs to be thought about, because it is a reality when you create pullovers, you do create areas where there is going to be more rubbish deposited. Somebody has to deal with it. It is another issue that needs to be considered, it is not a straightforward decision of creating a pullover and then you just walk away from it.

We are also concerned about the possibility of these pullovers, especially the Chain of Lagoons one being combined with a loo with a view project, which wouldn't make any sense in those areas given there is a toilet only 2 kilometres from there at the Chain of Lagoons campgrounds. Even though it is not part of this project it is connected, because the two things are one after the other.

I think you have asked all those questions about how the different sites were prioritised. We have talked about consultation. There was somebody else who rang State Growth to try to obtain some information about the project and they were not provided with details either, which I have mentioned. I have talked about wildlife corridors so that is about it really.

**Ms RATTRAY** - In regards to the accessing of the website, the Social Pinpoint, in your experience, obviously was not easy to navigate.

**Mr DUDLEY** - It is a generational thing to some extent. I prefer to talk to people on the phone or be able to access hard copies of things. I am not a total Luddite but there is quite a significant portion of the population not on Facebook or engaged in social media. To do proper consultation you have to do a range of different communications so everybody is aware of what is going on.

**Ms RATTRAY** - For the record, can you give me a couple of examples of good offsets you have seen in the past? Or have I put you on the spot?

**Mr DUDLEY** - It is very difficult because with offsets there is a problem because generally, it leads to a net loss so it is something you only want to do as a last resort, whereas it seems to be becoming more of a first resort, if that is the right terminology now. I did have one example a few years ago where there was some roadside widening on the Esk Highway between Fingal and Avoca. We put in a submission on a development application suggesting an offset should be required because it involved clearing some threatened vegetation and that was not taken up. The general principle with offsets is that if you impact on a threatened species or a habitat -

**Ms RATTRAY** - Then you put it somewhere else.

**Mr DUDLEY** - Yes, there are two options: for example, a supermarket needs to be built and you clear 2 hectares of a rare forest type. In theory that should be an area with similar species and in similar conditions should be protected. Ideally, it should be more than just that, it should be an additional area established as well, because if it is just substituting what is lost with something that is already there, it is a negative.

It is worth noting, especially around Diana's Basin, the *Eucalyptus ovata* forest has just recently been listed as critically endangered under the Commonwealth Environment Production and Biodiversity Conservation Act. It is a bit of a consideration that needs to be considered.

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As far as off sets, my view is it should require not only trying to protect similar habitat with roadsides, it could also include mandating restoration of the roadsides disturbed afterwards. In some cases, it would be feasible to re-establish some threaten species - especially threatened grasses - as part of the restoration process.

**Ms RATTRAY** - As an adjacent or adjoining landowner have you had a one-on-one visit, a knock on the door, or any contact?

**Mr DUDLEY** - No.

**CHAIR** - Is there anything encroaching on your land? That is the question.

**Mr DUDLEY** - If the road is being widened yes, it would potentially. As I have said before, when I first moved to where I live now about 28 years ago, the whole road side was covered in Spanish heath. Over the years we have systematically completely removed this and I do regular removal of rubbish along the road as well. We take quite a lot of pride in our roadside area and so we do not want it to be impacted if it is possible.

**CHAIR** - You were talking about *Eucalyptus ovata*. Would you say it was critically endangered?

**Mr DUDLEY** - Yes, critically endangered. That has only been listed in the last few weeks.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I was not aware of that.

**CHAIR** - That is black gum. What habitat is that for?

**Mr DUDLEY** - It is because the actual forest type itself has been 90 per cent lost in Tasmania.

**CHAIR** - It is not swift parrot?

**Mr DUDLEY** - It is swift parrot habitat as well, but it has been listed just because of vegetation communities.

**CHAIR** - It is a flora issue not a fauna issue.

**Mr DUDLEY** - Also *Eucalyptus obliqua*, but that is not the Great Eastern Drive issue. But there is *ovata* in some sections between Diana's Basin and St Helens Point.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Are the large dead pine trees on your property?

**Mr DUDLEY** - No, they are not on my property. They are just to the south of ours and on the other side on the eastern side of the road. It was a small Radiata pine plantation established 50 or 60 years ago and there is a number of 30- or 40-metre high trees there that are or very close to dead. They are a significant safety risk that should be looked at. Because it is where the road realignment probably should take place, you could kill two birds with one stone.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Okay, thank you.

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**Ms BUTLER** - On roadside vegetation management I have two questions. What is the best way as far as road management to deal with that issue of overhanging trees over a road?

**Mr DUDLEY** - They have practices in most of the agencies to deal with trees along roadsides. They are a bit better at managing than they used to be and do not tend to cut the trees down straight away, they tend to look at it.

**CHAIR** - Bring an arborist in?

**Mr DUDLEY** - If it reasonably healthy, they will just try to remove any branches they think are a risk, rather than removing the whole tree. I think that is the standard practice most of the time now.

**Ms BUTLER** - The conservation point of view, is that is a good balance?

**Mr DUDLEY** - Yes, I think so.

**Ms BUTLER** - It is a completely different question - so you are a local person?

**Ms RATTRAY** - Nearly, 28 years.

**Mr DUDLEY** - Talking about the consensus in the community around this project today and what feedback are you receiving I do not think anyone is really aware of it. That is probably the long and short of it at the moment. As I mentioned, even though I do understand the previous projects are not part of what you are considering but I have had some negative feedback about the Four Mile Creek carpark, the Dark Hollow and the Beaumaris turnoff. Actually, just about all of them people have said to me for various reasons, they are not all that happy about them. As far as these upcoming ones, at this stage, I do not think there is all that much awareness about what is being proposed.

**Ms RATTRAY** - There is nothing firm.

**Mr DUDLEY** - That is a part of it, but I can't speak for everyone, just for the people I socialise with.

**CHAIR** - You have certainly given us a good rundown of what your concerns are, but before you go, just to remind you of the fact the parliamentary privilege does not apply to anything you might say outside and to the media, et cetera, and thank you for coming along and giving us your evidence. Thank you.

**Mr DUDLEY** - Thank you.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**

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**Mr BILL MANNING** WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** - Welcome, thank you very much for coming to present evidence to this committee. I will read this to make sure you are aware and that before you give evidence, I would like to inform you of some important aspects of the committee proceedings. First of all, it is a committee hearing and a proceeding of parliament. It means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege. As an important legal protection, it 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 and it applies to ensure the parliament receives the very best information in conducting its inquiries.

It is important to be aware this protection is not afforded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside the confines of the parliamentary proceedings.

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

**Mr MANNING** - Yes, I understand.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Do you have an opening statement? We have not received a formal submission from you, but we are about to receive a verbal submission, so over to you.

**Mr MANNING** - My wife and I owned a place at Four Mile Creek; we purchased in 1978. For about five years we used it as a weekender and enjoyed life. Then in 1983, along came the Chain of Lagoons road link and it was the Gray Liberal government, I think, then -

**CHAIR** - Sorry, the Gray government?

**Mr MANNING** - Yes, proposing that link. But what I want to talk about is consultation and whether or not the parliamentary standing committee has a definition of consultation and what should occur in relation to the community, whether it is this department proposing this, or whether it's forestry, or whoever it is.

The need for the community to understand the avenues they can take to be heard is really important and certainly did not occur - well, Four Mile Creek car park, as such.

**CHAIR** - You realise that is not a part of this particular -

**Mr MANNING** - I do, yes. The other thing is the follow-up compliance. Does the standing committee have a position where they can follow-up to check whether there was proper consultation and whether the construction of the - whatever it is - has complied with the plans, because the plan is only as good as it is carried out. If it has not been carried out according to the plan then you have got a bad result.

My background is in forestry. I had 20 years as a forester in the Forestry Commission in forest management and 13 years as a statewide auditor, investigator and prosecutor with the Forest Practices Authority, so compliance is a thing that I am really aware of. I know it is difficult but there needs to be follow-up.

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On the coastal issues, in 1983, when the Chain of Lagoons to Falmouth road link was proposed, we as a community went to the council and said that we would like to be bypassed, will you represent us? The council refused. They said the standing committee will do what they are going to do and the Roads department know what they are doing.

We formed a ratepayers' association to be heard and none of us knew what we were doing, really, but there were 45 properties at Four Mile Creek at the time and there is still around about that under the road. We formed the ratepayers' association. I was president and various others had other positions. As such, I gave evidence to the parliamentary standing committee, which met in Scamander and later in Hobart. On both occasions I gave evidence and had meetings with Ian Braid, who was the minister, and Stephen Salter was the local member of parliament.

To cut a long story short, the proposal was to go through the settlement along the foreshore, which would have cut all of us from the access to the beach. That was the preferred route. The second route was on the back fence of the majority of the settlement but it was demolishing two or three places in front of us. The third route was going to cost an extra million and go where it is now.

Interestingly, at the time I was the deputy district forester of Launceston and my district forester was one Evan Rolley. Evan did an environmental impact study on a logging road going through that area and it was cutting the land use, which was a kilometre from the coast. That was the position I put to the standing committee. It was -

**Ms RATTRAY** - You were wanting to make the point about consultation.

**Mr MANNING** - Yes. The other thing was that, with the agreement by the parliamentary standing committee to fund that road, there was a recommendation made by a consultant for the Lands department, who had been the director of Lands and I can't think of his name now. Dementia has set in. The department purchased a number of access points to the coast for the public access and tourist access, for viewing points and access to beaches. There was Cod Rock Point, Boulder Point, McIntyre's Beach, which was a huge camping area, and a section of land on the beach at Four Mile Creek that now has the house on it, and all the other properties I mention do as well. None of the properties, which went along with the agreement that we had with this to support the bypass and the road were purchased. That is what I am saying. The only one that was purchased was the small area at Little Beach.

The follow-up, and I spent years writing letters to various politicians trying to get this section of the beach at Four Mile Creek purchased, we ended up doing three tribunal appeals against a proposed house there and a Supreme Court challenge. In the end the council changed the planning scheme to allow the house, which is there now. So we lost all those opportunities.

**CHAIR** - All I can say at this point in time is that this particular committee doesn't set the agenda. The Government sets the agenda as to what it wants to achieve and where it wants to spend its money. What our remit is is to look at each of the projects that are put forward to make sure that everything is in reasonable order. We can only either accept or reject, we cannot amend any of the projects.

**Mr MANNING** - And you don't have a follow-up.

**CHAIR** - From that sense we don't have the follow-up arrangements.

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**Ms RATTRAY** - But the Public Accounts Committee do.

**CHAIR** - That's done by the Public Accounts Committee.

**Ms RATTRAY** - We could send a reference there.

**Mr MANNING** - Okay.

**CHAIR** - That's possible.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I can send a reference.

**CHAIR** - The committee can't.

**Ms RATTRAY** - No, a member can.

**Mr MANNING** - So that is the process.

**CHAIR** - Yes, that is the process. Today we can only deal with the projects that are before us. Sadly for you, Four Mile Creek is not one of those. That's something that's happened in the past. The points you make are interesting points and it probably points for discussion for us to have as a committee to consider.

**Mr MANNING** - Yes, I understand that. I was just making a point.

**CHAIR** - You have made your points well in the sense of long-term planning, and all those sorts of things, is what you are really getting at, and we understand and appreciate that.

Do you have anything in particular to talk about in relation to these projects?

**Mr MANNING** - No. I would just like to support what Todd said about the carpark at Four Mile Creek. I don't want to waste too much of your time-

**Mr DUDLEY** - There's a pull-up place at Four Mile Creek.

**Mr MANNING** - Is there?

**Ms RATTRAY** - There is a project at Four Mile Creek listed. It's in the long list - formalised gravel pull-over, No. 12.

**CHAIR** - Yes, it's a formalised gravel pull-over area to promote scenic views. My apologies, I said there wasn't one, there is one.

**Mr MANNING** - I do remember seeing that. That's the view going south to Chain of Lagoons. It's an area where we have historically used as a carpark to go surfing. There's quite a walk from there. We call the beach Horry Flob Nobs.

**CHAIR** - Horry Flob Nobs - that's an interesting one. I won't ask where that came from.

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**Mr MANNING** - I don't have any objections to that area being formalised.

I want to mention the Four Mile Creek site. I wrote quite a lengthy submission to the consulting engineer at the time and he said, as Todd indicated, that he had to go before the East Coast Tourism Association to get their agreement. What we had asked for was either they do nothing because the area was adequate for us. That is a famous surfing point where that carpark is. There was a cattle grid across the road and that is what the area is called, Cattle Grid. Twenty years ago, because there was so much flack over how close the road came to that section of coast we tried to get it moved 20 metres to the west to allow a decent carpark. The surfers and everyone used to park at right angles to the road coming around that bend where you first look south.

**CHAIR** - Are you pointing that up as a maybe something to be looked at for the future?

**Mr MANNING** - The council, the roads and transport and the community spent nearly \$200 000 improving that site and using a landscape architect for a fortnight to design sitting areas that have all overgrown, in particular using coastal granite but smooth, the yellow ones like you see. What we ended up with was a carpark that is half the site, the signs we were hoping for were not put up and that was 'no overnight stays', there are no toilets there, we didn't want them. We were not listened to and there is nowhere else to go so where do you take it.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - I encourage you to put that in a letter to the council but also to write to the new Minister for Infrastructure because you have concerns about the process. The good thing is we do have department here to hear that but I think to let the minister know and you are allowed to put it all in an email and send it to Mr Ferguson and articulate your concerns but also to council as well and your local members.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I was going to say cc a couple of your local members in.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - At any time as a constituent you can write to your local members.

**Mr MANNING** - The council generally doesn't answer community groups.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Give your local members a call.

**CHAIR** - There sounds like there a couple of avenues for you to follow up.

**Mr MANNING** - Thank you for your time.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**

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**Ms HELEN CORDELL, Mr KEVIN BOURNE AND Mr STEFANO CONFORTI WERE RECALLED AND EXAMINED.**

**CHAIR** - Thank you for coming back. You have heard some of the concerns. Tania has a question to ask.

**Ms RATTRAY** - In regard to the road widening right through, we need to get some understanding. Is that road widening right through the whole T7/T5 and the issues that were raised?

**Ms BUTLER** - From St Helens to Diana's Basin.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It is not the whole length from St Helens to Diana's Basin.

**Ms CORDELL** - No, it is not the whole length of the Great Eastern Drive, it is purely from St Helen's Point Road where the project starts up to Basin Creek Road.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It's not just T5 and T7, it is the -

**Ms CORDELL** - No. We're going for consistency. The widening of the road is important in that area because it is just growing south of St Helens. So it is factoring all that in. It's making it wider as well as the overtaking opportunities.

**CHAIR** - To clarify, it's the whole link - T5 and T7 combined?

**Ms CORDELL** - In that northern section.

**CHAIR** - That's going to be widened?

**Ms CORDELL** - T5 and T7 stand alone as overtaking. Then the cross-section between will be the 3 metres and 1 metre all sealed and then 0.5, which is gravel.

**CHAIR** - The point that was being raised was why not extend T5 to T7?

**Ms CORDELL** - Potentially that could be looked at. As I say, we have done the high-level thing and when it is when you get onto the ground and start doing further work that you maybe do some amendments.

**Mr BOURNE** - Sorry, that wasn't my understanding. Todd's submission must -

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - Is the widening happening according to the proposed works map? Is it happening from that point through to that point?

**CHAIR** - Hansard can't see that.

**Mr BOURNE** - Yes, that's what we're saying, yes.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - For Hansard, on the proposed works submission attachment, there is a point where it starts from St Helens Point Road and it describes it through to Basin Creek Bridge - CH9510 - and that is where the widening will occur - from that section to that section.

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**CHAIR** - All the way through?

**Ms CORDELL** - Yes.

**Mr BOURNE** - Separate to that is the T5 and T7 overtaking lanes.

**CHAIR** - With two overtaking lanes - I think what has been suggested is that one of them is fairly close to St Helens -

**Ms RATTRAY** - And doesn't need to happen.

**CHAIR** - It doesn't really add a lot of benefit. The T5 one does, and wouldn't it be better to extend that. That is my reading of it.

**Ms RATTRAY** - And not do T7, full stop. Is that something that you will go away and have a look at?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Definitely. As a general comment all the points that Todd made are extremely good for us because he has a local knowledge, he knows facts and is specific and positive in his comments. All of those will be taken onboard and will be looked into. I think he was extremely good. At times people complain about something when the job is finished and there isn't any benefit in that. But I think all the comments are valid. We will look into them. I'm not sure whether all of them will be taken onboard -

**Ms RATTRAY** - The suggestion is saving money, Stefano.

**Mr CONFORTI** - Totally.

**Ms RATTRAY** - It might be a better outcome.

**Mr CONFORTI** - Absolutely.

**CHAIR** - Anyway, you've taken that onboard and you will consider that. Thank you for that. Any other questions that members wish to ask of the department?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - With regard to endangered species, can you roughly outline what the process is with DPIPWE in regards to getting approvals for tree removals, especially if the swift parrot is in that area? Are you able to comment on that?

**Mr BOURNE** - We have done desktop surveys so far. Further to that, we would need to do some field surveys to identify onground truth of that desktop information. That would be done by an external consultant specialist in this area. Then we would need to put in an application for a permit to take to DPIPWE depending on whether it was threatened flora, threatened fauna or threatened vegetation community. Todd's submission referred to each of those separately.

DPIPWE is the regulator in this regard. They would be the ones that would grant that permit to take. They would put conditions on it, such as how the works would need to be undertaken, but also whether there were any offsets required. Depending on the species, as I said earlier, whether offsets would be appropriate and also what ratio the offsets would be. It is not always one to one. Sometimes it is one to four, one to ten even in terms of the number of specimens or even area. It

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really is a matter of the survival rates of revegetation with offsets. That would be all as a condition on the permit from DPIPW. We are bound to follow what conditions they put on the permit.

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - It is a statutory requirement. If they outline the conditions you must follow those conditions?

**Mr BOURNE** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Another mention was made of wildlife crossings. Do you have any comment on that in terms of possibly the need to look at that when you are doing you widening and overtaking lanes and the like? Do you know of any particular issues there?

**Ms RATTRAY** - I guess it is how you get them to go to the crossing and cross.

**CHAIR** - Well, you give them a map!

**Ms BUTLER** - There are hot spots.

**Ms CORDELL** - As you say there are hot spots and the environmental groups and consultants would be looking at that. Previous projects have done different treatments, is my understanding.

**Mr BOURNE** - We have put in penguin culverts on Bruny Island. They have been successful. We have put in green and gold frog provisions within culverts so that they can cross through without going across the highway and getting squished and that sort of thing.

**Ms RATTRAY** - The locals are talking about kangaroo mostly.

**Mr BOURNE** - I am just saying that these are the particular things where the department has developed guidelines for particular species of threatened fauna. I am not aware of whether we have got any in those particular locations but if there was a need that developed that would be I guess driven by DPIPW again.

**Ms BUTLER** - It is also a safety thing as well because locals are aware of where the hot spots are, so we all know where to slow down. Tourists would have no idea. It can be really dangerous for tourists if they do run into some of those animals as well, so it is also a safety concern. It is not good of course for wildlife, especially if they are endangered wildlife, but it also a safety risk. There are lots of reasons for the hot spots to be considered especially along the Eastern Drive. There are so many of them.

**CHAIR** - There is some technology that is being developed too, isn't there, with regard to noise and lights against objects?

**Mrs PETRUSMA** - For the Tasmanian devil, I think there is now a program for noise or different barriers.

**Mr BOURNE** - This is an area where, as I said, we would be getting reports from specialists in that area about what recommendations they would make for mitigation of impacts, but also from DPIPW in terms of the conditions on the approval.

## PUBLIC

**CHAIR** - It seems like roadkill is an issue in one or two of those locations that these projects cover. If you are saying that that sort of thing will be looked at, it is important that that happens.

The roadside handbook was an interesting thing that Todd brought forward. Vic Roads the roadside handbook.

**Ms CORDELL** - Was that the vegetation one?

**CHAIR** - It is just simply called *Roadside Handbook*. It looks at any number of things: general and environmental guidelines, construction guidelines and maintenance guidelines. I do not know whether you are aware of that.

**Ms RATTRAY** - If you cannot source let me know and I will get Todd to copy it and I will send it through.

**Mr BOURNE** - The department will engage contractors to work within its standard specifications which are based very closely on Vic Roads specifications including environmental management, all of those things. I am not certain whether it refers to that publication directly, but we were referring to the current specifications.

**CHAIR** - The observation that was being made is that it does not seem to be done very well and maybe there is an opportunity to reconsider some of those things. Knowing that the booklet is around, maybe it is something you might care to look at in the future. You might even modify the guidelines occasionally, depending on whether it has some good suggestions. We hear what you say; you have to do it according to some standards, but there is an always an opportunity to improve.

**Mr BOURNE** - We also have external superintendents that monitor the compliance of the contractor against those specifications.

**CHAIR** - Thank you for that.

**Mr CONFORTI** - I think our specification would be extensive on this subject. We have all the guidelines and directions to follow.

**CHAIR** - As long as they followed, that is good.

Consultation with landowners near Diana's Basin was raised. You said that you had some consultation. Do you feel that you have covered that territory or not?

**Ms CORDELL** - No, because we were at the early stages and so the next step, as part of this stakeholder community engagement plan, which would include going out and talking to all of the stakeholders and landowners, et cetera, in the area.

**CHAIR** - So they're not going to get a surprise when a grader turns up to do some work?

**Ms CORDELL** - No.

**CHAIR** - I think that was one of the main concerns.

## PUBLIC

**Ms CORDELL** - I think it's because we often work at the very high level and get some sort of idea before we go out to communities so that we have something to work with.

**Mr BOURNE** - There may have been some confusion with what we said earlier in terms of the 30 sites project versus the Diana's Basin project. On the 30 sites, there has been some high-level discussions with landowners, but on St Helens and Diana's Basin, there hasn't.

**CHAIR** - Sorry, that was my confusion maybe, because I did ask the question about those 30 -

**Mr CONFORTI** - I was specifically saying that that report with all the Pinpoint and comments we had were on the 30 sites. They said that for Diana's Basin to St Helens, just the general manager of the local council was consulted.

**CHAIR** - There was a comment made about the East Coast tourism organisation seeming to have a major input and influence, rather than the general public. Do you wish to make any comment on that?

**Mr CONFORTI** - That is one of our stakeholders but it is not limited to them. For example, as I did talk to Todd previously, I indicated to our consultant to put Todd as a stakeholder and he would be consulted just as much as any other.

**CHAIR** - The comment was that it seemed the tourism organisation had an overt say in things. But is it because it's largely a tourist project that they are being consulted more, or not, or is that something else?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Perhaps the tourist association, or maybe Todd or the stakeholders have different interests, but there is not one that they prioritise over the other.

**CHAIR** - With respect to black and yellow arrows identifying threatened species, flora species - what can you tell us about that?

**Ms CORDELL** - We will have to take that one on notice.

**Mr BOURNE** - The only thing I would say to that is, and it is what Todd said only, if that was done a while ago, things do change. Todd also referred to the recent listing of other vegetation communities, things do change, so the on the ground stuff is not what is used as the basis for regulations. It is the databases on the list, et cetera. While it might be useful historical background, it is not what we are bound to follow.

**CHAIR** - There was one comment made in relation to the northbound overtaking lane 3 kilometres from St Helens - and I think this is right - that the widening should be on the other side of the road and not take out significant trees.

**Ms CORDELL** - That's fine because we are working at the really high level and we lay something down and then all those factors like trees and everything would be put into it, and in that case, potentially, it could go the other way. You have to look at all your constraints and then prioritise them and see which is the better way to go. So we don't just lay it and say, 'There goes the trees'. We say, 'Right, these are here, let's do a bit of a realignment over here and we can avoid those'.

## **PUBLIC**

We also have to think about safety of the road environment and how close those trees are to the road itself. So potentially if we move the road over, it may be moved over further to have that safety zone from the tree, or a barrier might be put alongside the tree so that they don't become a danger themselves.

**CHAIR** - A few things to consider, but you have heard the concern?

**Ms CORDELL** - Absolutely. We always try to avoid environmental issues. As Todd said, it's a tourist route and we want to try to keep it that way.

**CHAIR** - They come here for a reason, it's because we're an attractive place to come.

**Ms CORDELL** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - The stripping of top soil and reusing it is a sensible value for money issue. It already has seeds in it. Do you have a comment on that statement? Is that something that can be considered, that the top soil taken off one area can be reused to revegetate in another area?

**Ms CONFORTI** - It will definitely be taken onboard. I am not exactly sure of the specification on how to do it but we will listen to all of this and find the best way to tackle the revegetation.

**CHAIR** - I think that is pretty well it. Obviously there is a lot said and a lot in the submissions. You will get a copy of these submissions that have been made, so that they can assist you.

Before we go there are a number of questions we need to ask. Does the proposed works meet an identified need or needs or solve a recognised problem?

**Mr BOURNE** - Yes, we believe so.

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

**Mr BOURNE** - Yes, we believe so.

**CHAIR** - Are the proposed works fit for purpose?

**Mr BOURNE** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Do the proposed works provide value for money?

**Mr BOURNE** - Yes, we believe so.

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

**Mr BOURNE** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

## **PUBLIC**

I remind you that once you walk outside this room and speak to anyone, you don't have parliamentary privilege as you have had today. Thank you for coming and presenting to us. We appreciate it and we will now consider the project.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**