

## PUBLIC

**THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, GROUND FLOOR, HENTY HOUSE, CHARLES STREET, LAUNCESTON ON MONDAY 17 JUNE 2019.**

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### **WEST TAMAR HIGHWAY SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS**

**Ms ROBYN HAWKINS**, PROJECT MANAGER, PROJECT SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH, **Mr JONATHON ELLIOT**, PROJECT MANAGER, JACOBS ENGINEERING WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mr Valentine) - Thank you for appearing before the committee today. We are very pleased to hear your evidence. Before you begin giving your evidence I want to inform you of some of the important aspects of committee proceedings that you may not be aware of.

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

**WITNESSES** - Yes.

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

**Ms HAWKINS** - Thank you very much. The department's submission is the West Tamar Highway traffic solution package of projects. The objectives of these projects are basically to deliver transport efficiency and also road safety improvements along the West Tamar Highway between Riverside and north of Exeter.

As part of our submission we are looking at four projects: reconstruction and widening of the West Tamar Highway between the Gravelly Beach intersection and Rosevears Drive; reconstruction and widening of the West Tamar Highway between Atkinsons and Waldhorn Drive; to provide overtaking opportunities between Exeter and Batman Highway; and looking at a left-turn acceleration at the Motor Road-West Tamar Highway junction.

These projects have been identified through various stakeholder representations such as from the West Tamar Council, the Royal Automobile Club of Tasmania and members of the community. It is looking at the need to address both safety and efficiency along the West Tamar Highway.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Members, over to you for questions to the department.

**Mr SHELTON** - We did look at that section from Gravelly Beach Road to Rosevears Drive in the tour and the difficulties of finding the right width for safety there, particularly for the

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impediment on those households or blocks that are on the western side of the highway. Is that all manageable from an engineering point of view?

**Mr ELLIOT** - Yes, it will certainly take a lot of design effort to make sure we can widen the highway and improve the sightlines while also trying to balance the impacts on the properties and ensuring that the driveways meet the standards that we are aiming for. I guess you create a new footpath on the eastern side there. Yes, I believe they are manageable.

**Mr SHELTON** - It is always difficult because when you go out on a site visit and you ask a series of questions, when we come back into these committees we need to ask them again to get the issue or point put on record. It was mentioned there that at the moment the road width is only about 14 metres but to gain the safety requirements the department is looking for, you need to go to 21 metres. Is that it?

**Ms HAWKINS** - Yes. At the moment it is 14.5 metres in terms of the road reserve. To fit the shoulder widening and the footpath, we are looking at around 21.5 metres as the preferred option, which is supported by the West Tamar Council.

**Mrs RYLAH** - In project 3 of the projects, you mention having a gravel verge. Are all the verges gravel or is it only that one?

**Mr ELLIOT** - Is that the overtaking opportunities project?

**Mrs RYLAH** - It is project 3 - Exeter to Batman Highway, page 9.

**Ms HAWKINS** - Basically, yes, there are sealed travel lanes and sealed shoulders and then a gravel verge on outside.

**Mrs RYLAH** - As per normal. I was not quite sure why it was mentioned.

**Ms HAWKINS** - Sorry about any confusion.

**CHAIR** - With project 1 and the issue of fog along this section: are there any Australian standards on low visibility situations - such as when fog is present - that need to be considered with this project?

**Mr ELLIOT** - I am not exactly sure on the standards, apart from your normal sight distance standards, both your stopping sight difference and safety intersection sight distance. Improving the sightlines throughout that project through vegetation removal and widening of the sealed width would make a better scenario for fog anyway. I am not aware of the standards. I am not saying there could not be.

**CHAIR** - We are all expected to drive to the conditions.

**Ms HAWKINS** - I was going to say that and it is no different to excessive rain and that kind of thing.

**CHAIR** - Drive to the conditions.

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**Mr SHELTON** - I had one on consultation. Whenever we deal with these things, it is all about understanding what community expectations are and how this has eventuated. From the paperwork, you have been talking to the council and their road safety committee about their highest priorities. This is overcoming the issues the community has raised through the council. Can you explain a little bit about the process and the communications process that has been place?

**Ms HAWKINS** - The department has been working with both the council and directly affected stakeholders looking at the options and safety improvements, particularly on this Rosevears to Gravelly Beach section of the highway. The options analysis development of the project was done by Jacobs on behalf of the department. Two options were put forward.

Option two was trying to look at a reduced footprint of the overall impact of the road and the actual requirement to take additional land. It meant there needed to be some reductions in terms of the shoulder width and that kind of thing. The feedback from discussions with council indicated it was not acceptable to council. It also meant things like some of the junction upgrades were not able to be included because of again the reduced overall width.

Discussions with council and the broader community consultation has happened. We have been out both doorknocking with directly affected residents and also a public consultation period that had Social Pinpoint letterbox drop to 183 people along the highway and given them an opportunity to comment. The option one proposal is generally well supported, acknowledging there will have to be some management through the detailed design process of the impact on residents through that section.

**Mr SHELTON** - Thank you.

**Mrs RYLAH** - In regard to the sightline issue and the growth of trees on the sightline, we have had this issue on the Midland Highway before in Public Works, which party is responsible or which will be responsible for managing the side of the road so that in 10 years time we are not back in the same situation, or will this be dealt with by the increase on the width of the road reserve?

**Mr ELLIOT** - I am not sure on the long-term situation.

**Ms HAWKINS** - Any vegetation within the road reserve controlled by State Growth; it is the department's responsibility to manage that vegetation. Certainly the increase of the overall road reserve will benefit keeping those sight distances in the long term.

**Mrs RYLAH** - In relation to drains and ditches, vegetation slows the water down, leading to more back-up of water, therefore more inundations with water all over the road. What will be done about ensuring our drains are clear in the future? Substantial work looks like it will be done on drainage in this project. Will drains be kept clear?

**Mr ELLIOT** - In terms of the design work, drainage was a key issue. There will need to be transverse longitudinal drainage improvements. Probably a number of pipes installed across the road to transport the water away. For long-term maintenance of the new drains, a maintenance program would ideally be set up to make sure it doesn't get blocked by leaves and detritus in the drains.

**Mrs RYLAH** - And grass.

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**Mr ELLIOT** - Yes, and grass and various other things. That is more of a long-term maintenance program with the department.

**Ms HAWKINS** - The committee has been on the site inspection and you would have observed the drainage that's there currently. In terms of the overall project we are aiming to formalise the drainage on both sides of the road. I believe it is kerb and gutter on one side and a concrete spoon drain on the other.

**Mrs RYLAH** - It's an ad hoc arrangement at the moment, isn't it?

**Ms HAWKINS** - Yes, so it will be a vast improvement on what is there now.

**CHAIR** - If I can go through a number of questions on each of the projects, unless anyone has any overview questions?

**Ms BUTLER** - Regarding the nature of our engagement here as the Public Works Committee, for the record I want to clarify that we are asked to provide a yes or no on the project. At the moment it is still at the concept stage. I am used to dealing with more finalised projects. Is there a recourse? We might be providing a yes or a no today, but later on down the track you may run into problems with the project. Can you talk us through why it's at a concept design instead of more of a finalised design?

**Ms HAWKINS** - Absolutely. The department is looking to procure this package. Each of these projects has a package and the intention is that the tender for these works will be a design and construct tender. The consultation, the concept design and the department's requirements will be put to tenderers and they will be required to come up with a costing and an option that is going to meet those requirements. As the projects are developed we believe they will at this stage, particularly the Rosevears to Gravelly Beach Road project, need a development application, so there will be certainly more community engagement as part of those processes, as the detailed design is worked through.

We would be aiming to work within the cost estimates we provided to you for these projects. With Jacob's assistance we are reasonably confident at this stage that we can deliver. There has certainly been risk factored into those cost estimates.

**Mr ELLIOT** - Risk and contingencies have been factored in for this stage of where we're at in terms of the project and the design.

**Ms BUTLER** - Is this something that happens quite often - getting a tick from Public Works so early in the stage, or is it usually at a later stage?

**Ms HAWKINS** - I believe in terms of going out to market, we cannot do that until we have approval from the committee. That's why it is necessitated at this stage?

**Ms BUTLER** - And overall?

My other question is about the decisions on the projects that were chosen by State Growth. I think there were six and then four? It was narrowed down to four. There seems to be a lot of information in the document about fatalities and crashes and injuries to drivers. Was that a driver for the decisions that were made and which projects to undertake as well as costings?

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**Ms HAWKINS** - No. It's certainly a driver in terms of individual projects, but in relation to the package, the department is looking to deliver the whole six projects. The reason we've tried to combine the four projects is that they're within the West Tamar Council area. One of the projects or the commitments from the Government has already been completed, the reseal and widening of the West Tamar Highway north of Batman Highway to Lightwood Hills Road. The other project is resealing and widening the highway between Brisbane Street and the Legana Park Drive roundabout for cycling improvements. Because there is a crossover between Launceston and West Tamar Council, that project will be delivered separately.

There has been no decision on behalf of the department on which projects to deliver. We are looking to deliver the Government's commitments, but for efficiency reasons these four are being packaged.

**Mr SHELTON** - As I understand it, the process we're going through today ticking off this concept that you've put to us is so that the design brief sent out to the contractors will follow what is ticked off today.

**Ms HAWKINS** - Yes, that's right.

**Mr SHELTON** - This process has to happen before you can put that information to the contractor.

**Ms HAWKINS** - Yes.

**Mr SHELTON** - This is making up the design brief that goes out with the contract?

**CHAIR** - So it fits within the parameters of what we're dealing with.

**Ms HAWKINS** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - So you would be reasonably confident that the resulting design after that goes to tender will be within this design brief?

**Mr ELLIOT** - As much as you can be at this stage for what we've undertaken. Aspects may change slightly, but we generally expect that it looks something like what we're saying.

**CHAIR** - Can you just explain that further with regard to consultation with the council through this process? The council in the past has expressed desires for certain works to be undertaken. This only deals with some of that. For the record, could you explain exactly what we have before us compared to what the fullest consultation was that you had with council?

**Mr ELLIOT** - How do you mean? As in -

**CHAIR** - What you're not dealing with in this that the council may have wanted to progress as opposed to what you are dealing with and what council - well, we're going to hear from council, I guess.

**Ms HAWKINS** - The department is progressing the Government's commitment to the projects they have identified and allocated funding to. We have taken these projects as we've progressed in

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terms of our option analysis to council. My understanding is that the council is very supportive of project 1, option 1. At our most recent discussion at a whole-of-council meeting, there was some suggestion about council's priorities being other projects in Exeter, but the department has reaffirmed with council that we are taking forward the Government's commitments to projects.

In developing these projects, we met with the West Tamar Safety Committee to develop and get their feedback on what they saw the needs were. They haven't been developed in isolation and they certainly haven't been developed without the department talking to both the council and taking it to the broader community.

**CHAIR** - If I can just go to some of the detailed components of the projects. Project 1, on page 9, talks about pavement widening to provide 3 metre lane widths, a 1 metre sealed eastern shoulder and a 1.5 metre sealed western shoulder to allow for cyclists moving slowly up steep grades. On some other projects it's been 2 metre shoulders, so can you explain to us why it is one-metre and 1.5-metres?

**Mr ELLIOT** - In terms of the standard of the highway at that location for the speeds, you would have a 1 metre shoulder, 3-metre lanes and 1 metre shoulders. Ideally we want to provide more room on the western side for the cyclists - an additional half metre - to allow them more room as they travel slowly uphill.

As they come downhill, our feedback from the West Tamar Council Road Safety Committee is that it is not as much of a concern because it is more according to the speed limit because it is downhill. It is trying to provide that additional width for cyclists on the western side while trying not to encroach as much as we can into the properties that are very close to the highway. I guess that is the philosophy behind what we are doing there.

**CHAIR** - I am mindful of the road rule that says you have to give 1.5 metres distance to a cyclist. If there is only 1 metre, it is bringing traffic reasonably close to the cyclist. Your explanation is good.

With respect to project 2, you talk about -

The road pavement is visibly deformed and uncomfortable to drive on over Muddy Creek Hill between Atkinsons Road and McEwans Road and the northbound overtaking lane to the south of McEwans Road is of insufficient length and is immediately followed by auxiliary left-turn lane.

What are you doing to rectify that?

**Mr ELLIOT** - I don't believe we are changing the length of the overtaking lane in the projects proposed. It is more about providing a 1 metre shoulder length where possible and giving a more consistent road environment. I don't think that has changed at all.

**Ms HAWKINS** - No. From discussions with the council's Road Safety Committee, in trying to discuss this commitment by government and looking at what actually their areas of concern were in that location, that was certainly the lack of consistent shoulders through there, and also the condition of the pavement.

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**CHAIR** - In some cases non-existent shoulders, as you say. So, you are providing shoulders, which is the important component.

**Ms HAWKINS** - Yes, that is right.

**CHAIR** - It talks about longitudinal cracking and rutting being present and landslip issues. We touched on this when we were doing the site visit. Is that intrinsic landslip issues or is it just bad road-building from previous years?

**Ms HAWKINS** - No, my understanding is it is actually the ground conditions themselves rather than the road.

**Ms BUTLER** - For the record, will the new drainage culverts on the project provide best-practice techniques for that landslip with the drainage?

**Mr ELLIOT** - Project 2 is more focused around the shoulder widths. Any drainage provided would try to meet the standards required there and take into consideration any of those that are on a more active hillside. It is something that will have to be looked at in more detail once the design is progressed further.

**CHAIR** - From a technical perspective, how do you propose that the landslip issue might be addressed? Is it through vertical pylons or something like that?

**Mr ELLIOT** - What we have said in our previous options assessment is that there needs to probably a bit more of a detailed look at that issue to understand it better. From my understanding it has not been looked at in the detail needed. There is a bit more work to be done there in terms of understanding that.

**Ms HAWKINS** - If a retention strategy is required or maybe even looking at things like having the drainage done on the uphill side of the road and managing that.

**CHAIR** - Project 3: again, these works will include widening of the existing pavement to include an additional 3.5 metre lane, a 1 metre sealed shoulder and a 0.5 metre gravel verge, along with full-depth pavement construction and spray sealing. In your consultation, was the cycling community happy with this, that you were aware of, or maybe the Traffic Committee on their behalf? I know there was a cycling group that had some input but I wasn't quite sure exactly how that was. Could you explain that?

**Ms HAWKINS** - In our discussions with the Road Safety Committee there definitely was recognition from council of the need for overtaking opportunities in those locations, understanding that there is an opportunity near the Supply River location, but it is basically take the opportunity when you can. There are good sight lines through there but the sealed shoulder that we are proposing to provide will greatly improve what is there at the moment.

**CHAIR** - On that project we are talking about - project 3?

**Ms HAWKINS** - Yes.

**Mr ELLIOT** - It would be commensurate with what is required by the road standards throughout the state -

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**CHAIR** - To a point that has been brought up in another submission with regard to the length of road needed for overtaking lanes, it's been brought to our attention that B-doubles use that road; therefore, it is important that there is a sufficient length of road to overtake them safely. Do you have any comment on that and what is being provided?

**Mr ELLIOT** - The designs would look to Austroads Standards to achieve the minimum road requirements and ideally the preferred or desirable requirements for overtaking lanes. I haven't got the numbers off the top of my head of the difference between the two, but it would all depend on trying to provide the overtaking opportunity for the longest length we can within those standards but also then balancing that with the impacts that are going to be to landowners on either side.

**CHAIR** - Quite clearly, the project that is to the north has a long sight distance and might not present as much of a problem as maybe the parts of the projects to the south where we have more corners and things like that.

**Mr ELLIOT** - Potentially, yes.

**CHAIR** - You are saying it is to Australian standards?

**Mr ELLIOT** - The designs would be, yes, that is right. It would be a requirement of the design and construction tender that goes out to meet those standards and design or replace something accordingly.

**CHAIR** - Down to project 5 - just butt in if you want on each of the projects, if anyone wants any further questions on project 3.

**Mrs RYLAH** - I have a question on project 1. I am sorry I didn't ask it before. Looking at the diagram, I think project 1 is the longest project.

**Mr ELLIOT** - It is deceiving.

**Mrs RYLAH** - Ignore that comment then, but I was considering it as the longer one when I was looking at it. Has consideration been given to put the wire divider down between the two lanes - because the traffic is moving quite quickly in that area - and making the concrete path and the cycling track as a both-use section there so that that would give you the extra metre? As I recall, it is about a metre that we need to be able to put a dividing wire in.

**Mr ELLIOT** - It is 2.1 metres.

**Mrs RYLAH** - Okay. So it doesn't give us enough.

**Mr ELLIOT** - That could be an option to look at but you start widening out further and it is just the impact.

**Mrs RYLAH** - Yes, I was trying to do it within the same footprint.

**Mr ELLIOT** - You wouldn't be able to draw it out but I believe that it would create further impact onto -



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**Ms HAWKINS** - Project 1 in terms of all of the projects is operating in a 60-kph speed environment.

**Mrs RYLAH** - All of project 1?

**Ms HAWKINS** - Yes.

**Mrs RYLAH** - That nullifies that. Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Project 5 talks about a number of private residential accesses will be impacted by the construction of the acceleration lane. Can you tell us for the record whether that is going ahead, or not? I believe it not, but if you can confirm and why not maybe?

**Mr ELLIOT** - With Project 5, to construct an acceleration lane somewhere close to the standards, it would be 100 metres of additional road to allow turning vehicles to move from a slow-moving position up to the somewhere close to the 100 kph speed zone. On the eastern side of the road there is a number of property accesses directly affected by this. To construct a new lane there it would be about 3.5 metres additional road. How that would then work with property accesses on an acceleration lane would be quite challenging and difficult.

In that project, we are proposing to improve the sight lines and improve the sight distance at the intersection for vehicles on motor road by looking north: primarily through the removal of the vegetation on the north eastern corner. We are also looking at sight benching works on the hill to the north to really open up the intersection to provide good visual cues as to what is the traffic situation approaching the intersection and make the right choice as to drive particularly for slow moving vehicles.

**Ms HAWKINS** - The option development was greatly informed again by discussions with the road safety committee and also looking at traffic vehicle movements at that intersection in terms of actual demand there. The treatment is commensurate with what is actually happening on site and the need for work through there.

**CHAIR** - Can I go back to Project 2? It was mentioned during the site visit about the right turn to the lower part of McEwan's Road when travelling north. Can you talk to us about how that might be improved, or is that not going to be dealt with at all?

**Mr ELLIOT** - At this stage there is no specific treatment.

**CHAIR** - There is not a slip lane?

**Mr ELLIOT** - Yes, a channelised right turn lane. No, not at this stage. The additional shoulder works may provide a benefit to sight distance, but I really cannot say at this stage.

**CHAIR** - The concern was coming up there to do a right turn with traffic travelling at 100 kph behind you. It is a matter of the person hanging back a little bit and slowing the traffic down to be able to do that right turn, if there is nothing being done in regard to that.

With respect to the concrete footpath on the eastern side in Project 1. Can cyclists use that? Is it designed for the occasional cyclist - as opposed to the lycra set? Is that a footpath that might see families using it as a cycleway or not?

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**Ms HAWKINS** - Given it is a 1.5 metre footpath we are proposing to provide I would not see there would be any reason why they could not use it. I suggest some of the cyclists you see on the West Tamar Highway would not be those.

**CHAIR** - They would not be using it; they would be using the road.

**Ms HAWKINS** - No, someone on a road bike potentially.

**CHAIR** - They would be doing serious business for those people.

**Ms HAWKINS** - Yes, a bit too fast.

**CHAIR** - Yes. Fair enough.

**Ms BUTLER** - I am not exactly sure which project it is. It could be Project 3 where there will be some acquisition of some property. In the documents we have been provided, the section on property acquisition we went through today showed some of those houses were quite close to the road already. There may be extension further into their properties, which would have them very close to traffic.

**Ms HAWKINS** - Are you talking about where the overtaking lane section is?

**Ms BUTLER** - Yes, could there be property owners who may be resistant to that acquisition? If that was the case would the department potentially move to a compulsory from of acquisition?

**Ms HAWKINS** - The department and Jacobs have contacted the directly affected residents in both of the sections of the proposed overtaking lane . At this stage they were all very supportive of the project. In terms of the positioning of the overtaking lanes, where possible we have tried to locate them where there would be least possible impact on properties. The general feedback we have received is that any widening should happen on the eastern side of the highway. That is to try to not get too close to houses where possible.

Regarding the acquisition process, my understanding is that the department goes through a compulsory property acquisition process but we are mindful of the impact of residents and try to work with residents where we can.

**Ms BUTLER** - Thank you.

**Mr SHELTON** - The report mentions some viminalis. It indicates that it is not a problem but then it talks in another place about there being a small patch. I am hoping, from the department's point of view, that we are not going to leave one tree sitting in the middle of a nature strip creating an issue a few years down the track when it gets bigger than a telegraph pole for somebody to run into. That is my only point with that. Threatened species are an issue, but inside a road reserve it can be problematic for travellers later on when it becomes too large. Any quick response to that?

**Ms HAWKINS** - As we work through to the detailed design phase of the project we will be able to make a better assessment of what vegetation will or will not be impacted. In terms of any vegetation that is endangered, that can potentially trigger a development application requirement rather than an exemption.

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**CHAIR** - Can you explain one thing to me. On page 12, 2.5.3 about sewer and water: 'Pot holing of these services will be required in the preliminary design stage'. Can you explain what 'pot holing' is?

**Mr ELLIOT** - The physical location of the services.

**Mr SHELTON** - They dig down with a pressure wash jet and a big vacuum cleaner. They bore it out using water to find where the line is or where the pipe is. Rather than digging down with a spade and cutting it in half they use high pressure washes.

**CHAIR** - Very well explained. Thank you. Hopefully not that high a pressure that it bursts the main.

In Projects 3 and 5 on that same page, you say proposed pavement widening will impact the existing table drain network and may require the extension of existing culverts. Do you think the contingency amount that has been made available in this project is sufficient to cover all the vagaries of this set of projects?

**Mr ELLIOT** - Yes. At this stage I believe in terms of -

**CHAIR** - Looking at P50 and P90, the total project is \$14.2 million on P90 and \$12.85 million on P50.

**Mr ELLIOT** - Generally on a P50 a contingency of around 25 per cent is what you would expect or what you would be looking for. Your P90 is around 40 per cent, I believe. So given what we know at this stage -

**Mrs RYLAH** - I compared both the inherent risk allowance figures which range from 13 per cent to 12 per cent, a fairly narrow range across the number of projects, but within the contingent risk allowance the percentage is between 12 per cent and 4.7 per cent. What is the difference and why for such a large contingent risk allowance across the projects?

**Mr ELLIOT** - What page are you on?

**Mrs RYLAH** - I am on page 19. Do you want me to tell you which one has the high one and which one has the low one?

**Mr ELLIOT** - Yes.

**Mrs RYLAH** - In terms of the contingent risk, the highest is on Project 4 as a percentage and the lowest contingent risk is on Project 1. Can you give me an understanding of that? I think I know the answer but I want you to tell me the answer.

**Ms HAWKINS** - When developing the concepts for these projects, certainly with Project 1, there has been more investigation and development of the project. It has been ongoing since last year, developing the options and that kind of thing.

**Mrs RYLAH** - So there is less risk in the design phase, is that right?

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**Mr ELLIOT** - It has been developed more, particularly in terms of the concept level, quantities and rates. We understand that better than the other three projects. That would be my understanding.

**CHAIR** - Is that because there is a difference in the escalation? The difference in the percentage. The total contingency percentage above base estimate plus escalation. I am wondering whether there is -

**Mrs RYLAH** - Escalation is allowing for inflation. I think that is what it said earlier.

**Mr ELLIOT** - Yes.

**Mrs RYLAH** - It is quite significantly different. I didn't know whether that was the geotechnical information about the different projects or what you are doing. Can you take that on notice?

**CHAIR** - Yes, we can do that.

**Ms HAWKINS** - Absolutely.

**CHAIR** - It probably wouldn't hold the project up but you are interested in the concept of this.

**Mrs RYLAH** - To understand it.

**Mr ELLIOT** - Project 5 is where you are looking at the difference?

**Mrs RYLAH** - That one is on P50. It is a 12 per cent allocation to the contingent risk allowance. That seems to me like a truck and excavator for about three days.

**Ms HAWKINS** - Project 5 is pretty minor works.

**Mr ELLIOT** - It is very minor works.

**CHAIR** - It is only \$300 000.

**Ms BUTLER** - On page 23 you have major risk identified. Would that include the contingent risk? You have type, project time frames, stakeholder opposition -

**Mr ELLIOT** - Yes, they are within the contingencies, like the contingent risk. Inherent risks are more around your rates and the units that you use. The contingent risks are taking into account extended time, additional services, and things like that.

**Ms HAWKINS** - Project 5 doesn't have the issues of Project 3 and Project 1.

**Mrs RYLAH** - Right, but as a percentage of the cost, it is a much higher cost.

**Mr ELLIOT** - I think because it is so small. It is the difference between \$10 000 and \$20 000.

**Mrs RYLAH** - My concern is because this is a design and construct as opposed to just a construct there is potentially more risk. You don't have a finalised design. I want to drill down into that so we know that we are not going to go miles over budget.

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**Ms HAWKINS** - I understand.

**Mr ELLIOT** - I suppose within the design and construct parameters is a requirement for budgets as well.

**Ms HAWKINS** - Yes, that is right. It is not done in isolation in terms to the design and construction. The aim of the project will still be to deliver those objectives in a cost-effective manner.

**CHAIR** - No further questions, thank you.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**

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**Mr RAOUL HARPER**, INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGER, WEST TAMAR COUNCIL, AND **Ms JOY ALLEN**, DEPUTY MAYOR, WEST TAMAR COUNCIL, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** - You may have heard the statement being read before but I will read it to you again so that you are well aware.

Thank you for coming today. It is always to get input into these processes and projects and we are pleased to hear evidence but giving your evidence, I want to inform you of some important aspects of committee proceedings. The committee hearing is a proceeding in parliament. This means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege. This is an important legal protection that allows individuals giving evidence to a parliamentary committee to speak with complete freedom without the fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place out of parliament.

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

**Ms ALLEN and Mr HARPER** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. You may wish to make an opening statement.

**Mr HARPER** - Thank you for the opportunity, committee, to come before you today. I draw to your attention the letter we sent through as part of our submission. In making an opening statement, I reconfirm on behalf of the Mayor and the General Manager, who couldn't be here today, that the letter we sent does surmise the council's position at this point.

Again, I apologise that the Mayor couldn't be here today. She has been a passionate advocate for improvements to the West Tamar Highway, as have all the council for a very long time, including Councillor Kearney, who I note is here today, and Deputy Mayor Joy Allen next to me here. Council certainly is of the opinion that the projects they have been working on with State Growth now for many years are all worthy projects to be funded, and we have worked very collegiately with State Growth over that period.

What has become apparent over the last two years in particular with the projects put forward by council in our submission to the committee is that very much the traffic movements through the Exeter region are becoming quite significant now, especially heavy vehicle movements through the Exeter area. We believe that the allocation that has been made was \$1.2 million, not \$10.4 million, for the West Tamar area. I would be happy to be corrected on that. It should be put forward to projects that will have a significant impact on the safety of the users of the West Tamar Highway.

**CHAIR** - To clarify the question you just had, what were you suggesting there?

**Mr HARPER** - My understanding, and from listening to the Department of State Growth staff just then, was that \$1.6 million would be spent on improvements to the highway between Launceston and the West Tamar. My understanding is that is predominantly for upgrades to the

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shoulder of the highway to support cyclists. Let me make it clear that the West Tamar Highway Safety Committee is not supportive of that allocation outside of the West Tamar municipality at this time.

**CHAIR** - They are not supportive of the \$1.6 million?

**Mr HARPER** - Not being spent on that project.

**CHAIR** - Sorry, we just have to be a little careful because there are components that are not being dealt with under this. Projects 4 and 6 are not being progressed.

**Mr HARPER** - They are the projects that have been put forward by Jacobs and State Growth to you. We have not been privy necessarily to the details of those projects at the level you have.

**CHAIR** - I will let the department answer that.

**Mr HARPER** - Just continuing on from that, council is very supportive of the work that has been done at the Gravelly Beach Road and northern end of Rosevears Drive. That is very much seen as our number one priority.

**CHAIR** - That is project - ?

**Mr HARPER** - We haven't got the level of detail that you have there. I think we can be confident that it is project 1, having heard the discussion. The options put forward within that, as discussed by the Department of State Growth staff and the consultant of the 8.5-metre seal width and the 1.5-metre shoulder on the western side, the 1-metre shoulder on the eastern side and the 1.5-metre concrete footpath are certainly council's preferred option. In fact, this is a classic project that has been in the too-hard basket for far too long. We believe this is the one opportunity where it should be done once and it should be done well.

**CHAIR** - From what we heard from the department, option 1 was definitely the one that is in here being progressed.

**Mr HARPER** - Yes. That is very good news from our perspective. I guess the key difference that council is putting forward is that we have done - and you would have seen this in the submission that was sent through - preliminary design work and preliminary costings probably well beyond the basic concept stage. These have been designed fairly well and, we believe, fairly well costed to show the roundabout improvements that we would like to see in Exeter. These have the support of not only the West Tamar Highway Safety Committee, but have been discussed at a workshop with council and council has been very supportive of the direction taken.

**CHAIR** - But I don't think they are included in these projects.

**Mr HARPER** - They are not, no.

**CHAIR** - As long as you are clear on that.

**Mr HARPER** - Yes. In closing, in my opening submission, council is of a different position to the Department of State Growth in how these funds should be allocated. They are very supportive of the allocation put forward. Our position is that the money should be spent in the West Tamar

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area given the lobbying that went on to secure the funds for projects specifically on the West Tamar Highway by the West Tamar Council. We believe that some revision should be put forward by State Growth in their prioritisation of projects moving forward.

**CHAIR** - We can only deal with what we have before us. If there is a difference of opinion in terms of what ought to be funded between yourselves and the Government, that is for the Government to address. We can only address what is before us here today. I think you can appreciate that.

**Mr HARPER** - Chair, I can only put forward what I've been directed by the mayor and the general manager to put on the table.

**CHAIR** - I appreciate that.

**Ms BUTLER** - Has there been an effort between the council and State Growth in relation to the difference of opinion about the funding and what projects should be funded? Have there been attempts to communicate and negotiate that already?

**Mr HARPER** - Yes, there has. Council wrote to Shane Gregory at State Growth some months ago and expressed our position on this. Mr Gregory's advice was to put that forward at this committee hearing, as I understand it.

**CHAIR** - I guess the difficulty is, yes, it can be put forward and it goes on the record and the Government will have the opportunity to hear that. It is not in the documents we have before us today. There is the difficulty in understanding what may or may not be funded. We cannot direct the Government to spend its money in certain ways. We can only deal with what's here.

**Mr SHELTON** - I was going to add, Chair, that if council wishes to advocate a position that this not be passed, there would be a deferral and delay in the project and probably months of discussion about where it needs to go. As an ex-representative from the West Tamar area now and not in Lyons, unfortunately, the upgrades to the West Tamar Highway have been the topic of discussion for a number of years. The general thrust of the whole thing about safety improvements are very much welcome, I am sure, by everyone travelling that road.

**Mr HARPER** - I don't think council would be in a position where we would want to see the funding delayed.

**Ms ALLEN** - I am just a backup. Mr Harper will cover all of that. Council's submission did say that that's how they wanted it to be. They had priorities and those priorities have been going through the West Tamar Safety Committee. That has been their priorities.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Do we have any specific questions for our witnesses, other than what is being funded, on the matters that are here and the projects that are before us?

**Mr SHELTON** - From a member of the committee's point of view I would like to hear from the council that there has been a significant amount of consultation. Not everybody wins in any consultation process. That's what it means. I want to hear there has been a discussion about these things and there has been good dialogue in order to come up with what we have before us today.

**Mr HARPER** - I can confirm that's been the case.



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**Ms ALLEN** - Certainly has, yes.

**Mr HARPER** - I am more than happy to discuss some of the finer details around that consultation and projects that are put forward, because we have had ongoing discussions with the consultant and State Growth throughout the process.

**CHAIR** - Apart from the way that funds are being allocated to certain projects, with regard to the specific projects that are now on the books, is there anything in particular in the technical detail of the projects that you have concerns about?

**Mr HARPER** - The Department of State Growth and Jacobs have put forward already that there is significantly more work to do to drill down into the costings. The area of landslide risk, in particular, was a good point. That section of the highway and much of the West Tamar is subject to landslide problems. We have issues with that in our own road network and it's not a simple fix.

**CHAIR** - In terms of how that might be addressed, are you confident that it can be addressed?

**Mr HARPER** - I look forward to seeing how they will address it.

**CHAIR** - It sounds like you are speaking from experience.

**Mr HARPER** - It's a particularly problematic design issue and one that we will have to deal with on some of the projects that have been put forward.

**CHAIR** - With respect to the technical aspects of the projects - the overtaking lanes, the sealing of shoulders, dealing with drainage and sight lines and all things, do you have any issues with any of that? Are you happy that the project addresses those issues in a reasonable way?

**Mr HARPER** - From what I have seen, yes.

**Mrs RYLAH** - In summary, my understanding from reading your submissions and looking at the images, the difference between that and what we have in front of us is their lack of roundabouts.

**Mr HARPER** - Yes, that is right.

**Mrs RYLAH** - In simple terms, the proposal in front of us doesn't include roundabouts. You would like what we've got in front of us plus roundabouts?

**Mr HARPER** - No. We would like all of it, naturally, but we think the prioritisation given the increase in traffic that is going through the Exeter area since these projects started being discussed many years ago puts the other projects that are on the state Government's agenda less of a priority. What we are seeing at the moment is, in particular coming off the Frankford Highway going to Bell Bay, a very large increase in heavy vehicle traffic.

**Mrs RYLAH** - Log trucks.

**Mr HARPER** - It's not just log trucks. It's heavy vehicle traffic across the board.

**CHAIR** - Are they turning south or north when they are coming out of that road?

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**Mr HARPER** - No. They are turning off the Frankford Highway and heading towards Bell Bay, predominantly.

**CHAIR** - Doing a left.

**Mr HARPER** - Yes. There are also fairly significant mining operations in that area that also utilise the same part of the road network. We believe that the safety of road users would be better served doing two or three larger projects than what we have ended up with, which is one very important project at Rosevears Drive on Gravelly Beach and some other projects that are, let's say, more minor improvements to the functionality of the highway. It's a bang-for-buck issue. It's also trying to get genuine safety improvements to the highway.

**CHAIR** - Can the roundabouts you are suggesting be done within the same amount of project money?

**Mr HARPER** - They can be.

**CHAIR** - You think they can be?

**Mr HARPER** - As much as I can be sure.

**CHAIR** - Okay, I think you have made your point on that.

**Ms BUTLER** - You have been talking about the Frankford Road and Glen Ard Mohr Road. That is the main turning point, I believe, for parents picking up their kids at Exeter Primary School.

**Ms ALLEN** - Yes, and a huge number of buses go around that corner.

**Ms BUTLER** - That is a really congested area at the best of times, but it is also a safety issue for the entry and exit to that school. That's the only place -

**Mr HARPER** - Yes, that's right and that's the primary reason we put that forward. It is the safety of parents dropping off their kids and the kids themselves in the area. The roundabouts we have designed have been designed specifically to improve pedestrian and cycle safety in the design of the roundabout itself.

**Mr SHELTON** - Even though it's not part of this submission, at the Legana industrial area there is a big roundabout designed specifically because it's an industrial area. Here we are talking about heavy vehicle movements. These roundabouts don't look to be as large as the Legana industrial area roundabout. The problem I have come across is that when you put roundabouts in, it's fine for domestic traffic but as a route for heavy vehicles roundabouts are not necessarily the best option if you are talking about the problem being too many heavy vehicle movements. Unless you design a roundabout that is large enough and therefore encroaches on more people, then there are some issues there.

We are not talking about that in this submission, so I don't know whether there is any point in talking it further.

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**Mr HARPER** - You are right, but it is worth answering that these have been designed to suit the use of B-doubles. They are not little regional town roundabouts; they are actually B-double designed roundabouts for heavy vehicle use.

**CHAIR** - You can roll over them and all that sort of thing?

**Mr HARPER** - Yes.

**Mrs RYLAH** - The total cost I get of the roundabouts you are looking at, from your estimates, is \$2.24 million?

**Mr HARPER** - Correct.

**CHAIR** - Are there any further questions? Thank you for attending. I will need to inform you again that whatever you have said here today is subject to parliamentary privilege, but if you walk out the door and talk to the media, that may not be.

**Mr HARPER and Ms ALLEN** - Yes, that is fine, thank you.

**CHAIR** - We appreciate you coming along.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**

## PUBLIC

**Ms ELIZABETH SPRINGER** WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** - Thank you for coming today. We appreciate that. Before you begin giving evidence, I inform you of some important aspects of committee proceedings. A committee hearing is a proceeding in parliament. 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 the fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place out of parliament.

It applies to ensure that parliament receives the very best information when conducting its inquiries. It is important to be aware that this protection is not afforded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to by you outside the confines of the parliamentary proceedings.

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

**Ms SPRINGER** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much. Would you like to make an opening statement and perhaps tell us, are you an individual or are you representing an organisation?

**Ms SPRINGER** - No, I am an individual. I have lived on the West Tamar Highway for probably 50-odd years. I have seen two upgrades of the highway, one outside our place, which is at 785 West Tamar Highway where the bike shop is, right in the centre of Legana, and when they did the double-lane highway from Riverside to Legana. When that was put in, we had an input in that as well.

Nothing has been done on that highway for many years. I sit here and listen to you talk about shoulders and things like that. I put that submission in for passing lanes because there have been a lot of deaths on the highway. There is about one a year and that hasn't been mentioned. I haven't heard anybody mention the number of vehicles -

**CHAIR** - If I might, it is in our submission that there have been, to make you aware of that. There have been five - three, one and one, from memory - fatalities as a result of prior to this work being considered. Project 1, there has been one fatality, one serious and six minor, to give you an example. Project 2, there has been one fatal, and in project 3 -

**Ms SPRINGER** - In the different sections.

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Ms SPRINGER** - I travel the highway every day and passing lanes are what is needed for the safety of everybody. I'm not sure where the passing lanes are going to be. I couldn't understand that. I don't know how long they are going to be, if they're going to be long enough for people to pass safely. I am concerned that that is what we need.

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I do understand between the Gravelly Beach turnoff and coming back to town that little narrow bit of road needs attending, coming out of Legana towards Exeter where the landslip is. I doubt there have been any fatalities or accidents there - you just have to drive to the road conditions - but I understand it needs attending to.

Passing lanes is what we need - bottom line.

**CHAIR** - Okay, anything further?

**Ms SPRINGER** - No, that is all.

**CHAIR** - Any questions?

**Ms BUTLER** - Thank you for coming in and representing your community and making sure that is on the public record because you use that section every day and you know what is required. Thank you for doing that.

**Ms SPRINGER** - Thank you. There are not only the log trucks, there are the milk trucks. Also - and this is in my submission - there are the people coming off the ship, all the caravans and all that. But that is it, really.

**CHAIR** - We are told that the overtaking lanes will be to Australian standard, so there should be some comfort in knowing that.

**Ms SPRINGER** - Where will they be?

**CHAIR** - Exactly where the overtaking lanes will be at this time - it is a broad design. It will go out to tender and the exact locations will become clearer at a later point, I believe. We can ask that question of the department and have them clarify that as soon as they come back to the table, after you have finished.

**Ms SPRINGER** - Will that move the traffic from Exeter to Batman Bridge though?

**CHAIR** - North of Exeter?

**Ms SPRINGER** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - That is your main concern?

**Ms SPRINGER** - Yes, from Exeter to Batman Bridge is where there is only one place you can pass. You go through Exeter, which is 3 kilometres, I think, of 60 kph and 50 kph, and then you come to 100 kph and there is only one straight stretch of road you can pass from there. If there is other traffic coming you miss that chance.

**CHAIR** - Okay, we will ask that question of the department. Is there anything else?

**Ms SPRINGER** - No, I don't think so.

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**CHAIR** - Any other questions of Ms Springer? Thank you for coming along. Just to repeat about what you have to say if you speak to the media outside the room, you don't have the same parliamentary privilege as you do right now.

**Ms SPRINGER** - That's fine.

**CHAIR** - Thank you for coming, we really appreciate that.

**THE WITNESS WITHDREW.**

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**Mr JONATHON ELLIOT**, PROJECT MANAGER, JACOBS ENGINEERING, AND **Ms ROBYN HAWKINS**, PROJECT MANAGER, PROJECT SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH, WERE RECALLED AND EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** - We have the department back. Let us deal with that last one first, project 3, and it is north of Exeter with regard to the passing lanes. Could you inform us again, as best you can, exactly where those passing lanes are likely to be?

**Ms HAWKINS** - At the moment we are proposing a southbound overtaking lane or passing lane between Batman Bridge and Hjorts Road. Then the northbound opportunity is -

**Mr ELLIOT** - North of Supply River but south of Motor Road.

**CHAIR** - So there is one going north and one going south. The rough lengths of those?

**Mr ELLIOT** - The idea would be again to meet at least the minimum Australian standards for lengths so the minimum length we would be looking to achieve would be 550 metres in overtaking lane length, plus

**CHAIR** - And the bleed in to those?

**Mr ELLIOT** - You are looking at 100 metres to merge in. It is a merge so the extra will keep going out slightly and 100 metres going in, so they are diverging merge tapers. The overall distance we are looking at, the minimum total length is 815 metres.

**Mrs RYLAH** - Isn't that for one and isn't the other one longer? About a kilometre from what I saw on that map?

**Mr ELLIOT** - Yes. There is potentially one with more. The north-bound overtaking lane south of Motor Road has more area to use, or it might be easier to construct and meet the desirable length. Again, those details will be further looked at in the next phase of the project.

**CHAIR** - What would be the constraint on the distance there? Is it money for pavement, or simply the curves in the road and those sorts of things?

**Mr ELLIOT** - It is probably budget. The impact it has on the landowners either side, driveways and things like that, all tend to chew up your budget.

**Mr SHELTON** - Topography would also have to play a part in it, whether there was a large gully coming up where you had to narrow the road or a bridge, cutting, whatever.

**Mr ELLIOT** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - There was one other question regarding the council. It was about concentrating the money on other smaller components of the project rather than putting in the roundabouts, which may have been \$2.24 million in total. Can you talk about why the options were chosen? Do you know?

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**Ms HAWKINS** - Yes, at this point, the department is looking to progress the commitments made by the Government. To my knowledge, we haven't been given direction that that should change at this stage.

**CHAIR** - You can't make any policy decisions? We realise that.

**Ms HAWKINS** - No. I would also like to add that in the submission I have received from West Tamar Council, it is great to see both submissions to the committee, there was support for Atkinsons Road to Waldhorn Drive project and the overtaking lanes on Batman Highway junction to Exeter.

As was mentioned, these are the projects that provide safety improvements. Another point worth noting is, other than the Gravelly Beach to Rosevears Drive project, which is a 60 kph environment, the other projects are in 100 kph speed areas. In terms of the safety risks, particularly given that one of the projects is looking at allowing safe overtaking opportunities, it can't be disregarded.

**CHAIR** - Quite clearly, the Government has focused on these as what it wants to deliver.

**Ms HAWKINS** - Yes.

**Mrs RYLAH** - Would you agree with the comment that I said before, and that council agreed with, that council is supportive of all of these projects - it just wants the roundabouts as well? Is that your understanding?

**Ms HAWKINS** - I cannot speak for council. I can only talk on behalf of the department. I believe they are supportive of the projects that we have put forward.

**Mrs RYLAH** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - It is what is being put forward to develop, in terms of priority. It is a priority thing as far as I can see. From what we heard from the council and what the Government has proposed to put forward, there is a divergence in priority. It is not that they don't agree with the technical aspects of the projects.

**Ms HAWKINS** - No, and I would also like to add, in terms of the community consultation that we have done with the broader community, there was support for the projects that we have put forward.

**CHAIR** - Okay, thank you. Any other questions of the Government? No. So, to the questions we always wrap up with. Do the proposed works meet an identified need or needs or solve a recognised problem?

**Ms HAWKINS** - I believe so.

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



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**Ms HAWKINS** - I believe so, but as we have mentioned with what we are presenting to the committee today it will be progressed through a design and construct tender. There is further work to be done.

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

**Ms HAWKINS** - I believe so.

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

**Ms HAWKINS** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Just to remind you again about walking out the door. Parliamentary privilege does not apply to you. Whatever you say to anyone else outside these doors parliamentary privilege does not apply. That is the important thing.

Thank you for coming and presenting your arguments.

**THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.**