

**THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET AT
THE HUON VALLEY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 40 MAIN ROAD, HUONVILLE ON
WEDNESDAY 22 JANUARY 2003.**

GLEN HUON MAIN ROAD WIDENING

PETER TODD, MANAGER, ASSET MANAGEMENT, DIER; AND **STUART HUGHSON**, DESIGN ENGINEER, SINCLAIR KNIGHT MERZ WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Harriss) - Gentlemen, thank you for coming along. Peter, you will be familiar with the process from times when you have appeared before the committee previously that some of the things you have mentioned on the bus tour will need to be mentioned again, for the sake of Hansard. Also, thank you for the tour of the project so that members could familiarise themselves with what is being proposed.

Mr TODD - Thank you, Mr Chairman. For your information, I will give some introductory comments on the project and talk about its scope and rationale. Mr Hughson will then speak on some of the design aspects.

As I indicated on the bus trip and inspection, this project has arisen as a result of our maintenance contractor identifying this road as requiring pavement strengthening and improvement in the ride of the road. The road is a category 5 under and the department's road hierarchy and the maintenance contractor has identified that to meet his obligations under his maintenance contract he intends to undertake significant pavement works to strengthen this road.

The department then considered that this would be an opportune time to undertake widening works to improve the safety and operational condition of the road. It has then proceeded to undertake design for that widening. The project that we are asking the committee to consider today is for pavement widening to provide an overall improved cross-section of standard that will give us a 6 m sealed width. The pavement strengthening and shape wide quality, as I said, will be undertaken by the maintenance contractor as part of the costs of that contract.

There will be also improvement of pavement delineation, complete centre-line markings and provision of retroreflective pavement markers on the centre line. There will be new guide posts and improved curve warning signs. That is for the section between the Huon Highway and Canes Road, which was indicated on the bus trip today. That is the first section.

The second part, which is from Canes Road through to Judbury or the North Huon Road, is for traffic facilities only, including pavement marking, retroreflective pavement markers, guide posts and improved warning signs. The project is in those two parts and

the department believes that the project will deliver some significant benefits for the community.

With respect to the accidents, I have reviewed the accident reports and a significant number of those accidents are run-off-road accidents, left-the-road accidents or side-swipes, which is not unexpected with a road of that type with such a narrow seal width. We believe that widening the road to provide 3 m lanes to give a total sealed width of 6 m plus an unsealed shoulder and the verge will significantly improve the safety record of the road. While there is not a major safety problem, there will be an improvement in safety.

Also, the benefit to the local community will be the improved ride and surface condition of the road. It certainly is quite rough at the moment and as the maintenance contractor strengthens the pavement and repairs the surface it will certainly be an improved ride. I believe the project will then deliver for the community a road which is sympathetic to the environment through which it is passing and be a significant improvement to the road that is already there.

The project is limited to widening and the improvement of delineation. The department recognises that there may be other issues that could be addressed along the road but with limited funding we believe that this is an economical and sensible allocation of those funds.

Mr Chairman, those are my introductory remarks on the scope of the project and I'll ask Mr Hughson to talk about some of the design aspects.

Mr HUGHSON - Thank you, Peter. As I mentioned on the bus, we've completed the detailed design for the first 4.2 km of the highway which takes us along to the Huon Valley Cemetery. Draft design work has been undertaken on the next 3 km which takes us up to just short of the Glen Huon township. No design work has yet been undertaken on the rest of the project as far as Canes Road, which is the limit of the widening works.

The general objectives of the design process were to provide improved service and safety for road users due to road widening, that being the key outcome derived from the department's investment for the first 10.4 km. This builds on the back of the pavement improvement works which the maintenance contractor has committed to undertake as part of the southern Tasmanian road maintenance contract.

The additional 2.8 km beyond Canes Road to Judbury shall be upgraded in terms of delineation and signage only and, once again, this will work within the maintenance contractor's maintenance regime under its contractual obligations thereby helping to reduce additional costs to the department and to the Government.

For the first 10.4 km of the highway, the standard cross-section that has been adopted, in keeping with the department's road hierarchy system, is a 6 m seal providing 3 m wide lanes, 0.5 m unsealed shoulder and 0.5 m verge beyond that and 1.5 m table drains. The design is focussed on providing the most economical widening option and identifying and remedying impacts on property and services. Side drain alternatives such as curb and gutter have been considered in order to minimise property acquisition and service relocation and environmental impacts. All pavement widening works will have a

pavement designed for 20 years. This is in keeping with the departmental standard. Pavement markings, RPMs - retroreflective pavement markers - and guide posts shall be installed to the DIER standard requirements. Most sections of the road at the moment do not have line marking or RPMs. The final section, as I said, from Canes Road through to the end of the job at Judbury will have pavement markings, RPMs and guide posts installed to departmental standards.

The drawings included in the report to the Parliamentary Standing Committee only go as far as the first 4.2 km. They do include the draft plans for the next 3 km as well. Those plans have since been amended and will be amended further as we discuss the various issues with the property owners.

The treatment that has been applied to the first 4 km is indicative of the treatment that will be applied to the entire 10.4 km to Canes Road. Property acquisition is required along the length; we are about to embark on some of the acquisition process, providing the approvals occur. Everything is in place in terms of discussions with property owners and, in one case, relocation of an old barn. As discussed on the bus, there is a large amount of user road along the length of the Glen Huon where, because of the age of the road and the age of the properties, the road itself crosses over what is listed on titles as private property. These fall within the user-road category and therefore ownership transfers across to the State Government. That doesn't actually have to happen; they can remain the property owners' land on their title. It still remains user road though and the Government can still use it for the purpose of the road.

Various environmental impacts exist along the length of the road. We have had botanical, heritage and Aboriginal heritage reports undertake. There are no Aboriginal heritage reports found within the planned widening. There are some Aboriginal issues way, way off the alignment so they do not affect the proposal that is before you. There are quite a few vegetation issues in terms of stands of trees. There are various threatened species along the length and also vegetation that is not necessarily threatened but is important for certain fauna habitats - the swift parrot being one of them. Where there is a section in which we need to damage or destroy any of the threatened species, a permit will be sought from the Threatened Species Unit of DPIWE. One such application has already gone in for the first 4.2 km and, although I don't have the written correspondence, I have verbal approval from them that that will be given.

As to the heritage issues, there are old properties that line the entire length of the Glen Huon Road. Ninety per cent of the properties there are old and although we prefer that they do not be damaged in any way, shape or form they do not exist on any heritage list, either State or national. That being said, there are two properties in Glen Huon itself which are on the State National Heritage List and therefore when we get to the design for that area we'll have to take special note of those two properties. As it is, we aren't affecting any of the properties that have already been identified as old, and the maintenance regime of no vibratory equipment in the area required by the heritage consultant will be adhered to by the contractor. Other environmental issues such as water quality, air quality, noise, dust, stockpile and dump sites, interference with property access, delays to traffic will all be dealt with in the standard contractual arrangements between the department and the contractor.

There has been a public consultation process occur particularly on the first 4.2 km but is now occurring along further parts as we get down there. There's been routine communications between the department, myself and the Fix the Glen Huon Main Road committee meetings, attendance by DIER staff at these meetings, consultation with council representatives, direct discussion with property owners whose land must be acquired, fences need to be relocated or front yards and access are affected.

There was a public display of the plans for the first 4.2 km at the Glen Huon Community Hall on the evening of Thursday 14 November and the morning of Saturday 16 November 2002. The feedback on the widening was positive. The main negative feedback has been that the project does not address other safety issues such as junction improvements and alignment improvements. As stated by Mr Todd, the commitment from the Government for the entire length from the Huon Highway to Judbury is \$3 million. The State Government will fund the project over three financial years, costing \$1 million per annum. The first year is this current financial year.

The construction program, assuming all approvals are forthcoming, is to commence in March of this year on the first 4.2 km. Again assuming all approvals and design processes run smoothly, we expect to proceed on the rest of the project by July 2003 so that works can continue unhindered beyond the first 4.2 km. It is expected that the entire project will be completed by mid-2004.

CHAIR - There are some issues that I would like clarified. In the very early stages of the submission you made the comment that the project has been identified through the maintenance contractor's proposed pavement rehabilitation - Mr Todd gave evidence to that effect as well - and also through the Government's community forums et cetera and through dialogue between the government department and the Fix the Glen Huon Road committee. Are you aware, though, that nonetheless on 14 November 2000, after some substantial work by community members, a petition of something in excess of 800 signatures of concerned people from the area was tabled in the Parliament calling upon the Government to upgrade the Glen Huon Road in order for the highway to meet contemporary standards of safety?

Mr TODD - No, I'm not aware of that petition.

CHAIR - At the time or some time later, the response to the petition was that a safety audit was conducted in 1997 and reviewed during 2000. This advice to the Parliament came from the department. The advice went on to say that the safety deficiencies identified in the audits are being rectified in order of priority over the next four years and that the budget for the safety improvements is approximately \$80 000.

Mr TODD - I'm aware of those works and they've been ongoing over a number of years. They've been fairly minor works. As you can see, the budget is fairly small but there has been an ongoing program of some minor safety improvements. My recollections are that they concern safety barriers and signs and those sorts of works, but nothing more substantial than that that I am aware of. Those works have been ongoing.

CHAIR - Just so that I and other committee members might then be able to put into perspective the amounts that might have been used in that \$80 000 - as you said, it was a pretty insignificant amount to attend to safety deficiencies - can you advise the

committee of how much of that has in fact been expended since that advice given in 2000?

Mr TODD - I will have to provide that to the committee.

CHAIR - Insofar as getting the record straight as to the concern of the community, are you aware that, following some very disturbed people phoning me when there was a near multiple fatality, I wrote to the Deputy Premier on 28 February last year and sent numerous photographs of damage to property which occurred at the time and where the children were playing in the yard and almost killed? Are you aware that that did occur?

Mr TODD - Yes.

CHAIR - The Deputy Premier's response said in part - and I quote:

'The DIER has advised me that the primary role of the Glen Huon Road is to provide for local traffic and some heavy-vehicle movements. The road will continue to be maintained in accordance with intervention levels consistent with its role within the statewide road network.'

That suggests, as of March last year, that there was no intention to do anything about reconstruction of the road. My question then is, what has changed since 28 March last year to now put us into a position of deciding to do some works on the road?

Mr TODD - The change that has occurred is that the maintenance contractor, who is required to give us his forward program of works, indicated that he intended to do works on the road. That was one of the main catalysts for us to then see the opportunity to incorporate the widening. It is up to the maintenance contractor to determine what his program of works is going to be to meet the intervention standards across the network. When we became aware of that, we identified that this was an opportunity to fit in with those works because there are obviously lower costs because you have one contractor there working already so you don't have the establishment costs. So we saw that as an opportunity to do those works.

CHAIR - Can I just remind you that, as I indicated, there was petition tabled some years ago because the residents, the people of the valley, were concerned about the deplorable state of the road and the advice coming back was that basically, 'It is okay, we will continue to maintain it'. Isn't it fair to say that some years ago at least, following a formal process, the department in fact was aware of the deficient state of the road and could have made those same determinations - which you have just indicated to the committee it has since made - some years ago?

Mr TODD - They could have been made earlier but, as I said, it is fitting in with what the maintenance contractor has identified as his works program. So I think that that is the thing that has prompted us to bring it along now, not that we decided that we wouldn't do it then but we will do it now. I think that was the catalyst to see some advantage in doing it at the same time. We are always aware that we need to be maintaining the roads and obviously there are a number of roads across the State where we are looking at what the options are for projects. As this came along as a maintenance project with the contractor identified, we believed that this was a good opportunity to do it.

We have been aware of the concern of the residents. Yes, there has been some money, albeit being a fairly small amount, spent on some safety works. I am not saying that we have not been aware of some of the concerns of the community.

Mr BEST - Following on from that, when you were talking about the maintenance contractor raising concerns about the pavement strength, is there a report that the maintenance contractor presented? Are there regular reports that the maintenance contractor has presented?

Mr TODD - Without trying to get too technical here, there are five classes of roads in the State and the maintenance contractor is responsible for I think around 1 200 km of State roads in the south of the State. For each of those categories of road the maintenance contractor has a requirement to meet a number of performance standards. I'll talk about just one of them, which is roughness. I think we experienced some of that roughness today.

On the class 5 roads there is a target roughness that the contractor must meet, I can find that figure for you, which is an average over all class 5 roads. There is also a requirement that you can't have a lot of really smooth ones and some really rough ones as well, so there is also a percentile that you've got to keep within. So the maintenance contractor sees that 'My target for a class 5 is' - I think it's around 94 but I might need to check that - and identifies a very rough piece. 'If I correct this it is going to help me in meeting my obligations under the contract.' So that's the basis for what the maintenance contractor comes up with. It's up to the contractor to work out the best program to deliver the outcomes that the department specified in its contract. That's how it works and we work with the contractor in making sure the design the contractor uses is appropriate and with a limit of 20-year benefits.

Mr BEST - It's reasonable to assume that there's an actual pro forma that's given to the maintenance contractor for the maintenance contractor to check the benchmarks rigorously. The contractors are paid an amount of money to maintain roads at a certain standard but they also undertake some inspection; is that right?

Mr TODD - Yes, they do. The department also has a process of doing an annual inspection with quite sophisticated equipment. It uses a laser probe to measure the shape of the road from which you can then determine the roughness. We monitor that every year and the contractor must meet those obligations. If not, there are penalties that the contractor will incur. So there is a very rigorous process of ensuring that the contractor is meeting those obligations.

Mr BEST - So in terms of the project itself obviously a lot of work has been undertaken by Sinclair Knight Merz and yourself, but in relation to identifying the problems, because that's been the heart of what we've been looking at today, and then making suggestions on the basis of the maintenance contractor, how limited are those suggestions? Are they limited to what's required in relation to the benchmarks of their contract or can the maintenance contractor make broad-ranging suggestions and say, 'This corner or this alignment is inadequate'? They can't do that?

Mr TODD - No, the maintenance contractor is only required to maintain the existing network. Improvements are outside the scope of what the maintenance contractor is required to do. The maintenance contractor is only required to maintain the existing pavement with alignment, vertical and horizontal geometry and to restore the road to that condition. Any improvements are over and above what the maintenance contractor is required to do.

Mr BEST - So any restrictions on any alignment issues or intersections et cetera are really financial and not so much due to reports that have been received or the categorisation of the road itself?

Mr TODD - That's right. Any other improvements would then have to be identified as a candidate project, as this has been in terms of the widening part, and then have to be funded like any other project. That has to then come out of the other funds that the department has available for roadworks.

Mr BEST - Right. So there must have been a report that looked at this whole issue and said, 'This is what could be done for this amount'.

Mr TODD - There has been a great deal of correspondence and so on. I'm not sure what you mean by 'report' but we've been working with a maintenance contractor and there's been significant negotiation because obviously this is going to have a major impact on the contractor's works and the timing of those works. So there's been those negotiations going on in terms of the contract itself.

Mr HALL - Mr Todd and Mr Hughson, I note that throughout the report it talks about the principle of doing 'as much as necessary and as a little as possible' so as not to impinge on the rural character of the route. My question is, and I ask you to comment: does this approach really provide the necessary safety parameters and the appropriate engineering that modern day traffic and residents require? Does it cater for future needs?

Following on from that, I am a bit concerned about what appears to be the philosophical approach of the department. As you are aware, this committee approved the Cradle Mountain Road recently and it has yet to be seen how that turns out, of course. Another one in my electorate is the Port Sorell Road. I get quite a lot of criticism from residents about the fact that that road has been upgraded yet it is still narrow and windy. I am concerned that perhaps this project may not deliver to residents and transport operators the result that they perhaps would like. Would one of you like to comment on that?

Mr TODD - If we had an endless supply of funds we could start again, but I believe that the funds that we are deploying will deliver some significant safety benefits when you look at the accident record along that road. As I said on the bus trip, a lot of the accidents have been left-the-road accidents or hit a stationary object. Mr Hughson indicated that in the first 4 km we are moving 30-odd hydro poles. There are the sorts of accidents, including side swipes, which are currently what you would expect on such a narrow road.

I believe there will be significant benefits. We recognise that it is not fixing absolutely everything on the road; we are quite open about that. We also recognise that on this road, as on many other roads across the State, there are many other projects that we

would be very pleased to do if sufficient funds were available, but we need to prioritise and do those projects that we believe will deliver the best outcome. We believe that the deployment of these funds will deliver some significant improvements for the community.

With regard to the traffic, certainly most of the traffic on the road is generated by developments along the road. The traffic volumes at the Huonville end are around 2 000 vehicles a day; at the Judbury end, about 400 vehicles a day.

Mr HALL - So from Glen Huon back this way, are you talking about 2 000 vehicles?

Mr TODD - Yes. If you look at the growth figures, the growth has been almost totally at the Glen Huon end. Over the last 10 years the growth at the other end has been very small. I think it is less than half a per cent per annum, which is a very slow growth rate. Notwithstanding, I still believe that even with this upgrade there is still capacity for further growth of traffic on that road. There are many other roads across the State which would be of a similar character, carrying similar if not higher volumes of traffic.

Mr HALL - I have a question about threatened species. Mr Hughson pointed out some of the problems there, where it may affect the eventual alignment of the road. My concern is that sometimes we do get a bit precious about some of these issues, even though I am aware that legislation requires we do so. With regard in particular to ovata, you can buy ovata from nurseries anywhere and you could replant. There were plenty of good examples of ovata, which are basically swamp gums, down on the flats there anyway. It just seems to me that some of those issues tend to get in the way of good engineering.

Mr HUGHSON - Certainly the decision at each particular location has to be based on its merits. Indeed at one location, as I said earlier, we have sought a permit to destroy the threatened species simply because the other factors around it in terms of property acquisition, service relocation et cetera outweigh this particular threatened species at this location. That botanists agreed that it is an isolated area and that if it goes it will not severely impact on the greater picture. We certainly are taking into consideration those issues and at the particular location you are talking about, where the ovata is on one side and the hydro poles are on the other, the decision has yet to be made about which way we do widen. We've stuck a draft on there and if we go one way we will have to pull the services out and if we go the other way we have to pull the trees out. Probably at the end of the day, if the dollars aren't that great in the service relocation, we'll go that way; if they are substantial we have to consider taking the ovatas out. As I say, that decision has yet to be made on that section of road. There are no ovatas in the first 4 km, for which the detailed design has been done, which fall into that same category.

Mrs NAPIER - What's the definition of a class 5 road as compared to a class 4 road?

Mr TODD - I will have to get you the exact definitions - I don't have it here and I'm not sure whether it's in the report - but we've got some target standards and so on and the design here is meeting what is in the class 5.

Mrs NAPIER - I was interested in the documents that were provided with this. It seemed to give us a couple of pages on the design and quite considerable detail on other assessments and the cultural and threatened species in other areas and I know that they're

important to have a look at. You mentioned that the traffic movements on that first 8 km or 10 km are 2 000 a day. What's the projection for increased traffic on that road?

Mr TODD - The growth is around 5 per cent per year. That is what is happening at the moment.

Mrs NAPIER - That's based on the historic trend?

Mr TODD - Yes, over the last 10 years or so.

Mr HUGHSON - The 2 000 vehicles has been measured near the Huonville Bridge on Glen Huon Road. It tapers off gradually as you get further out as people head up to their properties, so it's local traffic that is feeding that 2 000 at the Huon end as opposed to the 400 at the Judbury end.

Mrs NAPIER - What future projections are they? Is it expected to stay within the 5 per cent?

Mr TODD - I have no other information to say that it will be anything, that it will change dramatically.

Mrs NAPIER - What percentage of those traffic movements are truck movements?

Mr TODD - They are around 5 per cent, is that right?

Mr HUGHSON - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - Do you have those figures that you could perhaps provide the committee with at some stage?

Mr HUGHSON - Some of them are already in the report, in the introduction, section 1.

Mr TODD - The second last paragraph on page 1 has some of those figures there.

Mrs NAPIER - Has the Southwood planning project been taken into account as part of that projection for growth?

Mr TODD - I don't think there have been any decisions made on the transport routes for Southwood, not that I'm aware of, but I would expect that this road still has capacity to take an increase in traffic, including commercial vehicles, so I wouldn't consider that there is an issue with the design we're proposing. For your information, this road is not a B-double route and the Deputy Premier gave an undertaking that it would not become a B-double route, so that's the situation there. There's still capacity to increase the volumes on this road and I don't see that as being a problem.

Mrs NAPIER - I'm aware that the Ranelagh route was rejected on a variety of grounds and it was then expected that some of the traffic would be using Glen Huon Road, given that I think always the Glen Huon Road had some commercial traffic involved.

Mr TODD - That's right.

Mrs NAPIER - It is my understanding that the Southwood planning permit includes approval for raw material to Southwood, finished product from Southwood, and that would include sawn timber and veneer products and whatever might emanate from that. What projections for the traffic count do you have once that project is up and running?

Mr TODD - I don't have the detailed figures.

Mr HUGHSON - I haven't seen the figures myself. There was a recent Huon Valley council report which said that the increase would be 200 vehicles a day, so 100 in each direction I assume that means. Of that - and I don't remember the exact figure - it was something like 10 per cent would be truck traffic, so that is talking about another 10 trucks in each direction. If you look at our 2 000 figure at the moment, that means that the trucks are still only 6 per cent to 7 per cent.

Mrs NAPIER - How many trucks does that work out to per day?

Mr HUGHSON - Well, 5 per cent of 2 000 is 100 trucks, so we are increasing it by 10 or 20 in the 2 200 vehicles.

Mrs NAPIER - And you are saying that none of those trucks will be B-doubles?

Mr TODD - That's right.

Mrs NAPIER - Is it likely, given the trends that are occurring in modern transport and given the move towards B-doubles, that you will fairly quickly see the need to expand the road further to cater for B-doubles?

Mr HUGHSON - The Deputy Premier gave an undertaking that it would not be a B-double route and, as I understand it, that is the case. I can't see why that would happen.

Mrs NAPIER - The question then is, if the North Huon Road was being designed as a category 4 road - and I had some involvement in studying where that road was going - why is this road being improved as an existing category 5 road and why are we not considering that this road needs to be a category 4, the same as the North Huon Road?

Mr TODD - As we indicated, it is already a category 5 and we are retaining it at that level. My recollection from the traffic options is that there are a number of routes that would be used for Southwood, so this would not be a primary route or the only route. I think that there hasn't seemed to be a need to increase this in terms of its category.

Mrs NAPIER - Can I ask what consultation there has been within the department about the Southwood traffic route planning issues as a consequence of proceeding with this project?

Mr TODD - There has been some discussion but I have not been involved in that to any degree. I think the information that Stuart has given is probably the most up-to-date that we have at the moment. It is an issue that Forestry, I understand, needs to pursue. Southwood is not a project of this department, but it is a project of Forestry's. While

we have been aware of that and we don't believe that there is significant impact, I personally haven't been involved in any direct negotiations.

Mrs NAPIER - Mr Hughson, what information and advice have you received about the significance of this road as it relates to increased traffic associated with the Southwood project?

Mr HUGHSON - I have received none to date, other than to say that it would not be used as a Southwood route. Very early on, the Fix the Glen Huon Main Road committee expressed concerns that even if wasn't planned as a truck route the traffic increase would come from employees using the Glen Huon Road. The increase, they told me at the time - and I cannot remember those figures off the top of my head - was still insignificant in terms of what the capacity of the road will be at its new standard of 6 m seal width, 0.5 m shoulders et cetera. Those traffic volumes at some point become a requirement when we do our pavement design, but in terms of the capacity of the road are still well within the limits of what the capacity of the road will be.

Mrs NAPIER - So this road is being designed to cater for tandem trailer?

Mr HUGHSON - No. The standard of the road in terms of its - as you know, we're not changing the alignment of the road -

Mrs NAPIER - No, I know.

Mr HUGHSON - We're merely widening it to a given standard. I do not know what work the department has done to date on determining whether that standard is adequate to take a particular size vehicle or not, but it will come into play when we finalise the pavement design as the bigger trucks have a different axle loading and therefore we simply need to put in a deeper pavement to cater for the greater axle loading to ensure that the road sees out its 20-year design life.

Mrs NAPIER - I must admit I thought there was an election promise on this Glen Huon Road from both sides and I would have thought that was just as important as the maintenance contractor initiating it. Are you saying that this is being driven by the maintenance contractor and that it hasn't been driven by local concerns about the safety of the road?

Mr TODD - No. We have been aware of those issues and I indicated to the Chairman that we were aware of those issues, the letters that have been written and so on. It's just that when the maintenance contractor identified this as the works he was going to undertake on the existing road we saw this as a really good opportunity to undertake this widening. I think it was fortuitous that the maintenance contractor identified it at this time. I'm not sure what would have happened if it hadn't been on the maintenance contractor's program. I don't know. Yes, we have been aware of the concerns and the issues and the timing has been in good in terms of what the maintenance contractor has wanted to do on that road to meet his obligations, so that's how it has coincided.

Mrs NAPIER - Under the costing information you provided you said the initial estimate of the entire project is \$6.8 million and of this the State Government has committed

\$3 million. I guess when I read that I thought 'I wonder where the other \$3.8 is'. Probably I should ask that first: could you explain the costings to us?

Mr TODD - Simply the maintenance contractor is paid a lump sum per year to maintain the whole network and it is up to the maintenance contractor to work out the best way to spend that money. It's a rubbery estimate and in one sense that other \$3.8 million is inconsequential because it's up to the maintenance contractor to work out his own costs and we're not privy to those but that was our estimate of the funds the maintenance contractor would expend. It's up to the contractor to work out those costs.

Mrs NAPIER - As I understand it, you're asking the maintenance contractor to, in effect, commit \$3.8 of their own maintenance contract coming out of State funds.

Mr TODD - Well, they've identified this as a project. They've said, 'We need to upgrade this pavement'. We've made an estimate that that's going to cost them \$3.8 million. It might be \$3 million or it might be more, I don't know, and in one sense that's inconsequential. So they've identified that and they're going to spend the dollars we're already paying them - it is all State Government money - but they've identified they're going to do that work and we have then said, 'Okay, if you're doing that work here's a great opportunity to inject some additional funds to undertake the widening'. So really we only need to think about the \$3 million, not the whole amount, because those costs are the maintenance contractor's costs and something that he needs to worry about.

Mrs NAPIER - As I understand it, the project is going to be funded over the three years. Is there a breakdown of the components of the road that will be done over that three years?

Mr HUGHSON - As I said, we've designed the first 4.2 km. Approval pending, we can start straightaway and that will be given to the maintenance contractor. A start by March is the time frame we're trying to look at. Beyond that, the rest of the road is being designed at the moment and we will have to seek development application from the Huon Valley Council for the remaining 6-odd km. Once we've got all of that completed we can hand that over again to the maintenance contractor. The hope is that we have that all completed such that they don't complete the first 4.2 km in that time. It is more than likely that they won't. At that point they then continue to keep going, so the 4.2 km takes it up to the Huon Valley cemetery. We should be able to provide them with the rest of the design and all the approvals that are required to make the project proceed before they finish that first 4.2 km so they don't have to leave the site; they simply keep going, with an anticipated completion of the whole job by mid-2004.

How the contractor structures where he works and when he works is obviously up to him, but given that we can only hand over the first 4.2 km at the moment he is limited to working in that area for now.

Mrs NAPIER - What is the budget estimate for the expenditure on the 4.2 km - just the million dollars? Is it \$1 million each year or -

Mr HUGHSON - It is \$1 million cash flow to the department each year, so the contractor has been informed that he will be given \$1 million in each financial year. If it costs him more, he will have to finance that part of it. I don't know what is going to happen if it costs less in any financial year.

Mrs NAPIER - The question I was coming to before: do we have an estimate of what it would cost to redevelop this road as a category 4?

Mr TODD - My recollection from the standards, which really talk about cross section, is that we are getting very close to a category 4. I can't remember the lane widths but I think it is 2.75 m for a category 5 road. I think we are going to be very close to a category 4 anyway, so I don't think there will be that much difference in terms of cross section.

Mr HUGHSON - The department's categorisation takes into account the volume of traffic, the traffic usage, as well as the standard of the road itself and the speed zones involved. There are many different factors that go into determining a category of road. So just because we make it wider doesn't instantly make it a category 4 road. If it still has the same sort of traffic usage as it has at the moment, it will remain category 5.

Mrs NAPIER - Is it possible to tell us what the current traffic usage is of the North Huon road?

Mr TODD - No, I don't have those figures.

Mrs NAPIER - Could they be provided to the committee?

Mr TODD - It is a council road.

Mrs NAPIER - Well, the projections on that that might have been used when it was considered taking that over as a State road?

Mr TODD - I'm not sure it was going to be a State road. I will endeavour to get those figures on current use, was it?

Mrs NAPIER - Yes, the current use and what the projected use was. Obviously I am trying to have a look at why we decided that that might need to be developed as a category 4 when we were looking at the redevelopment of that road. We know there is going to be increased commercial traffic on this road as a consequence of the project. I am interested in what the forward projections are for that traffic compared to the forward projections for the North Huon road.

CHAIR - Can I come back to a couple of issues that Mrs Napier raised with regard B-double usage and the current undertaking by the Deputy Premier. It could be said that that is the political wish of the current government. What is to stop any government of the future simply overriding or revisiting that position? Once the road is built what can be done to stop B-doubles using the road in the absence of a political directive?

Mr TODD - We do a technical assessment of the road in terms of its alignments and geometry to make a recommendation whether it is suitable to carry B-doubles.

CHAIR - And so then sanctions can be placed on the road, or restrictions can be placed on the road whether it can be used for B-doubles or not?

Mr TODD - Yes.

CHAIR - Totally divorced from any political influence?

Mr TODD - No. I'm not sure whether I can comment on political influence but our recommendation would be to say that this road is not suitable for B-doubles because of these reasons and that would be our recommendation. I can't see why that would be overridden by anyone.

CHAIR - So in technical terms, then - to put the political issues to one side - will the reconstruction of this road accommodate the use of B-doubles? You have indicated that any impact from Southwood will be insignificant. As Mrs Napier has rightly said, the transport industry is moving fairly quickly with developments in road usage. You have indicated that with widening this road to 6 m larger vehicles will be capable of being accommodated. In technical terms, then, will the road when reconstructed accommodate B-doubles?

Mr TODD - We would need to look at that in terms of the geometry. Certainly in terms of the cross section it would, but we would need to look at some of the curves and at the tracking around them. That would have to be done during the design phase.

Mr HUGHSON - I believe that there certainly are corners on that road that would not be of a sufficient standard to carry B-doubles safely. Even if you don't look at the technical aspects and look more at the environmental, there are a lot of houses along the Glen Huon Road in which the front bedroom sits nearly on the road, so to have a B-double screaming past would certainly be another factor in saying no. That is further down the track should it ever happen.

CHAIR - It was pointed out to us, and everybody is well aware, that there is sawmill on the Glen Huon Road which has to receive product coming from the Huonville end as well to supply that sawmill. Currently there would be log trucks travelling that road regularly in both directions, not easily accommodated on the current pavement width. But there is no proposal here to realign anything, either vertical or horizontal deficiencies.

Mr TODD - That is correct.

CHAIR - Your submission says that the residents have been assured that all locations where the alignment is deficient will be added to the department's list of safety projects for consideration et cetera. The residents have been assured that that will go onto a list, but if the history of maintenance on that road and reconstruction and attention to safety is anything to use as a guide, that will be a list that will last for ever and nothing will be done. What do you say to the residents about the future attention to the many deficiencies which we saw this morning, in both vertical and horizontal alignment, which will not be addressed? Added to that, if you would like to address your mind, please, to the deficiencies in regard to side road junctions, property junctions and sight distances. They are the major concerns which have been communicated to you, I presume, as deficiencies in this proposal. How do you address that?

Mr TODD - Mr Chairman, as I indicated earlier, we recognise that this proposal is not addressing a number of safety issues that have been raised by the community. However, we do believe that what we are proposing will deliver significant safety benefits. We

recognise that there are candidate safety projects across the whole of the State and that, while there have been sites identified on this road, there are sites on other roads too. If we had an unlimited budget we would love to be able to address them all. We do need to prioritise. I cannot give any guarantee of course that particular sites will be addressed within a time frame. We don't know what other emerging issues might occur, budget impacts and all those sorts of things which are unknown. But we will, during the process, make sure that we do recognise those sites and have them listed and look at some options. We have given an undertaking to look at a couple of locations and what the options are. Notwithstanding, there is no guarantee that the funds wouldn't be made available. In particular, we've given an undertaking to look at Albury Road, to look at what possibly could be there, a very difficult site which we believe would be very expensive. Of course, we've got to look at all of the sites across the State. The accident record at Albury Road, for example, there is no major accident problem there that the records indicate. I understand that the locals have issues with the road and I appreciate that but we believe that what we're proposing here in this project will deliver benefit and will improve the safety of the road, while recognising that it does not improve everything.

I know a number of things were indicated this morning. Mr Hughson has gathered some costs of some of those projects and we believe that a lot of these projects that have been suggested would probably more than double the investment that's going into the road now. At this stage that is well beyond the scope of the department's budget. I'm afraid I can't offer any more really on that at this stage.

CHAIR - Just if we can then, you mentioned Albury Road and we stopped and had a look at that specifically; is it possible that if the road was totally reconstructed on a new alignment behind those houses which I pointed out so that we don't follow the river and then we come out somewhere west of Albury Road that problem could be quite easily overcome and a number of other problems concerning major deficiencies with regard the alignment?

Mr TODD - I agree, they could well be addressed but that would be well beyond the funds we have available. Stuart might be able to help me in terms of cost but the linear cost for a new stretch of road can be \$800 000 to \$1 million, so while land acquisition might not be difficult and people are willing to help out that way still the constructions costs are quite significant, particularly in a number of locations where very significant earthworks need to be done, particularly where the road is squeezed between the river and the quite high embankments on the other side. Very significant earthworks would be needed there to take out the curves. I guess that's why the road is where it is now because those who constructed the road years ago were following that line of least resistance. We recognise, yes, there are some very good ideas and if funds were available we would identify those as really possible projects, but at this stage with the limited funds we have it's not possible.

CHAIR - You've mentioned the alignment as it was constructed years ago and the line of least resistance but clearly that was before any major projects were anywhere near people's minds. We now talk about an environment which is going to embrace Southwood. There will be, I believe, contrary to what you've advised the committee, significant impact on the use of that road by Southwood because there can be no great restriction on the use of that State road for transport of product from Southwood or

transport of raw material to Southwood prior to downstream processing. And you've advised the committee today that your department, and Mr Hughson has likewise advised the committee, that there has not been any advice communicated to you of substance for you to consider with regard this design as impacted by Southwood. I find that an astonishing admission to this committee which you both made. That's a major concern. This committee, as you are well aware, simply has authority to approve or reject projects placed before it. This committee is charged with the responsibility of assessing an appropriate and judicial use of State funds. We will have to sit in judgment whether we believe the allocation of \$3 million on this project is an appropriate and judicial use.

If I could come back to Albury Road. Your design proposal suggests that right on that very junction you're going to install a bus bay.

Mr HUGHSON - That drawing has now been superseded and that's not the case; it's relocated 20 or 30 m towards Glen Huon.

Mrs NAPIER - On the other side?

Mr HUGHSON - It's on the same side but it's now away from the junction.

CHAIR - And rightly so, I would have thought.

Mr HUGHSON - Yes.

CHAIR - I was horrified when I saw that. To think that that junction currently is notoriously dangerous - notwithstanding that there are no reports of accidents - in both sight distance and alignment, and you intend to install a bus bay there.

Mr HUGHSON - I take fully responsibility for that. I instructed a junior to stick a bus stop at the junction; I did not realise they were going to take me seriously and put the bus stop in the middle of the junction.

CHAIR - I'm glad you've revisited it.

Mr HUGHSON - We rectified that problem.

CHAIR - If I can go back to your submission, you have indicated that you have communicated extensively with the Fix the Glen Huon Road committee and also you have met with community people and the general feeling in the community is one of acceptance of the widening. Well, surprise, surprise, of course it would be when compared to what is currently there. Nobody would object to what you are proposing. It is a matter of whether what you are proposing is not only adequate to fix up the notorious danger which the road presents to user now, but whether it will accommodate in particular the Southwood project. I have grave reservations whether it will. What do you say to that?

Mr TODD - I can't dispute what you have said. Yes, the feedback has been that people support the project as far as it goes but the comments have been, 'It doesn't go far enough', and we recognise that and people have raised many issues with us. We can only go on the information that we have on Southwood. As I said, we don't believe there have

been any firm decisions made on the transport options and we have not been given any more detail on what they may or may not be. We have been given some information through council on what the projected traffic volumes might be. Even if those volumes were doubled, that would still not be beyond the capacity of the road as it is going to be upgraded. We still believe that the road will be able to take an increase in traffic volumes.

CHAIR - Just to conclude on that particular area, if I might. Mr Hughson has indicated that when designing the road pavement you will need to take into consideration the likely usage of heavier vehicles. When are you going to know the impact of those other vehicles? When are you going to be advised? You have not been advised up to this stage as to the volumes and yet you have given evidence to the committee today that, based upon all approvals being forthcoming, this project will commence in March. How can that be the case?

Mr HUGHSON - The pavement design itself is going to be undertaken by the maintenance contractor for the reason that they are responsible for maintenance in the future. So the department determined that it made sense to give them the responsibility of undertaking the pavement design because if it were they who did not do it properly they would financially be affected by that because if it was underdesigned then the road would fall apart and under the maintenance contract that is in place they are required to fix it under a lump sum arrangement. So that becomes nil cost to the department if they stuff up the design.

In terms of the effect of the traffic volumes, the best information I have available to me - which actually came through from the council and not from the department - that is the best information that I can hand over to CSR at this point is to say these are the expected traffic volumes. Until such time as someone tells me differently, that is the best I can provide to them.

Mrs NAPIER - So the traffic volumes that we were given are in fact council's estimations -

Mr HUGHSON - The traffic volumes that are in the report are from the department's surveys that they undertake on a regular basis. The last one was done in 2002. The projections of what impact Southwood might have on Glen Huon Road, I was not given that information by council. Council produced a report which I have seen with those figures. The figures they quoted came from, I believe, the work that was done when assessing the North Huon Road project, so the figures they're using are based on something someone else has done.

Mrs NAPIER - When we were given the figure that it was likely that there might be a 5 per cent per year historical trend increase and your estimate was that the Southwood project might contribute a further 5 per cent over and above that, were they council figures you were giving us or were they department figures?

Mr TODD - The growth figures were departmental figures; the figures that Mr Hughson quoted were from the report. Those figures would be added together to give you the total volumes.

Mrs NAPIER - So that's where we came up with the additional 200 vehicles per day as a function of the Southwood forest.

Mr HUGHSON - Yes, that's right.

Mrs NAPIER - And just to clarify, what percentage of those were to be trucks?

Mr HUGHSON - As I said earlier, I cannot recollect the exact figure but I believe it was of the order of 10 per cent, which implies an additional 20 trucks - 10 in each direction. I can only assume 10 in each direction; it didn't give any directional information on where the trucks were going to or from.

Mrs NAPIER - Can I just ask - it's probably more appropriate to Transport - is it your view that in fact quite often B-doubles track better than log trucks? Given that a significant number of movements to and from Southwood are likely to be log trucks, as approved under the planning permit, would you not agree that the increased traffic of log trucks is likely to be just as an important an issue in road alignment as might the potential use of B-doubles?

Mr TODD - The current road is carrying semitrailer log trucks now so that will continue. I understand what you are getting at in terms of the tracking of B-doubles, and they do track well, but they do take a different line to a semitrailer and we would need to look at some of those curves. As Mr Hughson indicated, some of the existing curves are probably not adequate to take the tracking of B-doubles.

Mrs NAPIER - But are you guaranteeing to the commitment that the realignment that is being incorporated within this project is deemed to be safe by national standards for log trucks?

Mr HUGHSON - A very difficult question to answer. I have been given a standard to design to which was the widening to 3 m for the sealed and unsealed section beyond that. We have not run design trucks, either semi or B-doubles, around any of those corners to determine whether they will track in a safe manner or not so I'm afraid I can't comment on that other than to say that, based on my experience, more than likely those semitrailers - well there won't be B-doubles but the semitrailers certainly - will still drag their rear wheels over the centre line.

Mrs NAPIER - When we went on the trip up there the track is a goat track. A number of times that I've travelled on that road I couldn't believe that we still had a road that was like this. Isn't it true though that there are quite a number of sections where we were on the bus saying, 'It would be good to take that corner out. Get a grader in and pull the edge off'. It has been done on other places around the State. Wouldn't it be better to do those realignments given the significance of log trucks and other trucks, both those that use it now because of the sawmills that are there as well as the projections for future growth as a function of Southwood? And it is timber country, for Pete's sake.

Mr HUGHSON - Yes, it would be ideal to fix every corner, bring every corner to the width that is required, remove every horizontal and vertical alignment issue that exists, but as Mr Todd has said the funds are limited. If we took the \$3 million that has been allocated to this project and, for example, decided to go just as far as \$3 million would take us but

at the same time improve it to the best standard that exists in terms of vertical and horizontal alignments and fixing junctions et cetera, I doubt we would get any further along the road than about 3 km. I haven't done any costing on that but that would be my guess on what I know about the various safety issues that do exist in the first few kilometres of that road. We have already mentioned Albury Road, the other bit going behind those houses down near Harry Roberts' place. Those two projects alone would add \$1.4 million to the cost of that first 4.2 km, so you either spend a lot of money on a very short section and bring it up to a glorious standard, and who knows when the rest of the road might see any money, or you do a not-the-best approach to everything and do a much greater distance.

But we come back to where this project started from, which was that the maintenance contractor said they were going to go out and do a number of kilometres of pavement reshaping and rehabilitation and the department saw that as the opportunity to widen at the same time. Where the figure of \$3 million came from, I don't know. The department obviously has that money available and obviously didn't have more money than that otherwise we would be seeing such other projects falling into this one at the same time.

Ms HAY - Have any submissions been put forward for further funding if this, to other people's minds, isn't a significant or substantial benefit to the road?

Mr TODD - Most of the submissions we have received have been regarding other parts that should be included as part of the project. I'm not sure whether you consider that to be an additional submission but there have certainly been representations that other things should be considered as part of the project.

Ms HAY - Has that gone for any budget? Have you formally put that submission in for more money for the project?

Mr TODD - At this stage the forward program is fully committed for the next four years. I can't speak beyond that period. There is no scope within the current four-year program to accommodate any additional allocation to this project.

Mr BEST - You mention here retro-reflective pavement markers, improve warning signage and new guide posts et cetera - a whole range of safety treatment that is not present. What percentage improvement do you see that from a safety point of view compared with widening the road?

Mr HUGHSON - Certainly at night-time and on rainy days that will be an immense improvement to the visual warning given to traffic. Probably not so much to the locals because they know the road, but it is the tourists - not even the tourists; I hadn't travelled the road until I started work on this project. The first time I went along I went along an unknown road. If I'd done that at night, it could have been a different story but then I would have treated it as such and travelled a bit slower. One would hope that's what I would have done anyway. So certainly night-time amenity will be improved substantially and all delineation works during the daytime. But, as I say, most of the traffic will be local traffic and so they would know about the particular peculiarities of the road. That being said, there are a number of accidents along there as it stands at the moment. Whose fault I couldn't tell you, but I would say a lot of them still involve locals.

Mr BEST - Obviously it is proposed to maintain the speed limit as is -

Mr TODD - My understanding is there will be no change to the speed limit.

Mr HALL - It is the case that timber companies often do contribute to municipal roads and I think even to some State roads when there is a major project or a major load of timber to be moved. In the case potentially with Southwood, would it not be the case then that perhaps the proponent or proponents could contribute to a road like this in conjunction with the State if it got the green light?

Mr TODD - That is a possibility but I couldn't comment any further in terms of what negotiations or such have gone on.

Mr HALL - What I am getting at here is that obviously there has been quite a bit of concern expressed by members of the committee about the funds that are being expended on the road and whether it's going to cater for future needs, and Southwood has been highlighted. As I said before, if there were a contribution from a proponent as well as from the State then maybe the outcome might be the road that is designed.

Mr TODD - Yes, but I believe that if this project proceeded and we deliver the benefits that would come from this, there's nothing to stop further improvements of the road and the possibility of a contribution by a developer. There's nothing to stop that happening in the future. I don't think we have to stop this project because we don't know about all of the other things. I think that this can stand alone and we can deliver these benefits, recognising that it's not fixing everything. Then, if there were a decision and the developer wanted to contribute, there's no reason why you couldn't then say, 'Let's upgrade this section or that section'. I think that would deliver significant benefit straightaway for the community.

CHAIR - Just quickly Mr Todd to pursue that, what involvement did your department have with the proposals to reconstruct/upgrade North Huon Road as the major traffic route for Southwood? What involvement did your department have with regard to negotiations with Forestry, for instance, because my understanding was that there was going to be a commitment of funds from the Forestry budget to North Huon Road as well as a commitment of funds from, what I might term, your budgets?

Mr TODD - My only knowledge of that was that our department spent considerable effort in actually looking at the design and we spent a lot of time on the road - all of North Huon and all of Lollara Road as well. We did a lot of work in terms of looking at the design and what could be accommodated along there. I wasn't privy to any of the other negotiations that went on, so I can't speak about commitments from other budgets.

CHAIR - So you're not aware of what commitments from your department's budget had been made to that road?

Mr TODD - No.

CHAIR - You can see where we're coming from.

Mr TODD - Sure.

CHAIR - Clearly, Forestry were going to pour money into North Huon Road as was the general government budget, why not then the same for this particular project?

Mr TODD - I'm not aware of that.

Mrs NAPIER - I know that you asked about the bus bay? Could you just indicate where it's going to be relocated?

Mr HUGHSON - If you have a look at sheet 14 of the drawings, it shows the bus bay located in the junction, which, as I advised earlier, was erroneous. It's going to be moved down to chainage 2520 so that's about 40 m on from the junction on the left-hand side there. There is already a bus bay there at the moment which the -

Mrs NAPIER - Have I got the right page - I'm looking at page 16.

Mr HUGHSON - Sheet 15, on the far left-hand side, chainage 2520 on the topside of the road there. You will see there's a bit of a triangular shape there; that's an existing bus bay. We'll be reconstructing that at that location. The reason, unfortunately, my junior put it in the middle of the junction was because that's actually where the bus drivers wanted it.

CHAIR - Okay. Gentlemen, thank you very much. While Mr Todd and Mr Hughson are packing up, to the other people who are making submissions you will realise that we are running an hour behind time. Mr Duggan, you were to make the next submission and you were scheduled exactly one hour ago. You would be aware that both the Mayor and the General Manager, Mr Cockerill, who will be making a submission to this committee have other commitments at 1.45 p.m. for the Australia Day awards and they simply can't move from that. I just wonder, Mr Duggan, if you would allow us to take evidence from the general manager and the mayor for the next half an hour?

Mr DUGGAN - Mr Chairman, that is no problem. Are both gentlemen still going to be here?

CHAIR - Yes, sir.

Mr DUGGAN - There is a lot of information that they haven't told us and I would rather have asked those questions while they are still here.

CHAIR - They will be here for the duration of the hearing, so they can respond to any further evidence which is tendered.

Mr DUGGAN - I have no problem in postponing that and working that way. I just hope that the your deputy chairman gives us the indulgence.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG, MAYOR, HUON COUNCIL, AND **GEOFFREY COCKERILL**, GENERAL MANAGER, HUON COUNCIL WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE JOINTLY EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Harriss) - Gentlemen, we will be pleased to hear your submission and we will be asking some questions.

Mr ARMSTRONG - Thank you for allowing us to brief you today. Firstly, can I just say that as a council we do support the upgrading of the Glen Huon Road. It is a major link road through the Huon and has been in terrible disrepair for many a years. I think it is over 50 years since it has had considerable money spent on it, so it is definitely in need of a major upgrade.

We have some major concern with the plans that you have looked at and we've had many a delegation or representatives to council who have spoken to us about the upgrade. Firstly, we believe the alignment that has been planned here in certain areas is not up to scratch. The route of the road, particularly in front of Mr Harry Roberts's house, is another major concern of ours. It has been raised with us by several residents. The intersections on certain roads - Alburys Road, the intersection at the Channel Highway - and with the increased traffic that Southwood is going to have on there. We are looking at 200 permanent positions when Southwood is up and running, so just the amount of traffic that is going to be travelling out there, without the product going in and coming out. We have to remember that the product now that is going in will be coming from plantations in the Cygnet area, from south of Franklin, every way, apart from what's going to use the Forestry roads from Geeveston. All the product will be going in through Glen Huon and also the finished product coming out at North Huon Road as has been put out by the Resource Planning and Development Commission. We believe the plan that you have in front of you was put forward before Southwood had been approved. Now that Southwood has been approved we need a better road. It's got to be upgraded to a standard that is going to accommodate the extra traffic that we're talking about.

The road has been needed. It's over 50 years since it has had anything considerable done to it so we really need to get the best possible outcome from this upgrade. That is why we say that with the Southwood development it has to be done to a standard that is going to be able to accommodate that traffic over the next how many years.

Mr COCKERILL - Committee members, I suppose there are a couple of issues that I'd like to draw your attention to. Council finds itself in a very difficult position. It needs to represent its ratepayers and its residents but it is also called on to make decisions as a planning authority under the Land Use Approvals Act. At our council meeting on Tuesday night we had to consider a development application for these works. As a planning authority we could only look at the development application that was before us and judge it on its planning merits. Council, as I said, finds itself in an extremely difficult position as to how it can represent its ratepayers politically. The council believes that the project brief is constricted to such an extent that it doesn't address all the safety issues and all the issues that the residents believe ought to be addressed. On the other hand, as the planning authority, we have considered the development application that's before us; it complies with our planning schemes and we have issued a planning

permit for those works subject to a number of conditions. As I said, bear in mind it only runs from chainage whatever it is near the junction through to Cemetery Road.

There were a number of issues that were highlighted at our council meeting, particularly the junction with Glen Huon Road. We understand that it is outside the scope of this project, however it is absolutely integral to the whole road. You can't upgrade a road, put additional heavy vehicles onto that road and not address the major junction with the Huon Highway. Traffic volumes on the Huon Highway have increased dramatically over the past 12 months. We now look like having some 200 000 visitors to the AirWalk and the predominant route for that traffic is past this junction, so the department needs to look at that.

We have said to the department that part of the approval conditions will require that road pavement widening must be provided on horizontal curves in accordance with accepted engineering practice. There are a number of corners on this road that residents proposed to be bypassed to make a good alignment; however as the planning authority we didn't have the ability to express an opinion or judge that. What we've done is put a condition on it to ensure that the horizontal curves on the road are actually widened past the 6 m pavement which is proposed to at least assist traffic safety.

We have also placed a condition on the department that all intersections with Glen Huon Road and our council local roads are to be sealed in order to improve the flow of traffic onto and off Glen Huon Road. Bear in mind that it is only sealing the throat of the road - a distance of 10-20 m into the road from the pavement. The third condition that council placed on it was that the intersection of Alburys Road with Glen Huon Road must be upgraded in accordance with a separate report to be prepared by the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources and to the satisfaction of council's manager of engineering services. It is recognised that Albury Road junction is the worst junction. It is a double-level junction at the end of a corner. There is significant rural residential development that is serviced by that road and council believes that problem needs to be addressed, otherwise all we are going to do is increase a traffic black spot. The department has indicated concern at the conditions that council has placed on them and there are some discussions scheduled for tomorrow on those three conditions in particular. But as council said, they are issues that need to be addressed within the context of the brief of these works.

From a council perspective as well, we certainly have concerns that the vertical alignment of this road hasn't been addressed as it could be. I think lots of those comments probably apply to the next section of Glen Huon Road more than they do this section. There are some vertical curve alterations that ought to be done on this but more significant ones will come into the next stage and, Mr Chairman, I believe that is probably outside of the discussions here today?

CHAIR - No. We are considering the whole project, even though the documentation we have are not final design drawings, as I understand. This committee is considering the whole project. So you go right ahead and address any of the issues.

Mr COCKERILL - I think in the next section of this project there are some significant bends and there needs to be realignment of the road and particularly realignment of the vertical curves in those areas. As the mayor has stated, the original brief came before the

decision by the Resource Planning and Development Commission to force the traffic off North Huon Road. The original proposal happened before North Huon Road was wiped out, so the whole terms of the brief ought to be altered now to reflect the traffic movements that are going to happen on this road. If that is outside the Government's budget, so be it, but I think it came through quite clearly from the residents and the councillors on Monday night that they consider that the goal posts have been changed and therefore the brief ought to be changed. If there is going to be a significant number of heavy vehicles generated out of the Southwood project, then the standard to which this road is upgraded ought to reflect that.

I think it is also interesting to reflect on Southwood. In the short term it is proposed that the woodchips from there be transported out either over the link road into the Derwent Valley or via the Arve Road, so they wouldn't come through this. However, the long-term strategy for Southwood is that all the products that come out of there will be value-added and so it is logical to believe that in the long term there will be no woodchips coming out of Southwood; it will all come out as processed product therefore it will all come out via Glen Huon Road. In five years' time the heavy-vehicle traffic that will come out of this road could be quite staggering if Southwood is fully developed. On that basis, council believes that the brief ought to be altered.

Mr ARMSTRONG - Mr Chairman, just on tourism. Geoff mentioned over 200 000 tourists now are visiting the AirWalk alone. There's a lot of the tourists now that actually use Glen Huon Road and go through the Snowy Range Trout Farm and then through to the AirWalk, so Glen Huon Road is not only just going to cater for the Southwood traffic and local traffic, it's also going to cater for a lot of the tourism traffic as there are other tourism ventures proposed out that way. It is a major school bus route. I'm not too sure how many school buses actually use it. There's a school at Glen Huon, as you are aware, and there's the buses which travel from Judbury too, so we do have a major school bus route at the same time. It's going to cater for the school buses as well as the heavy traffic, tourists and the locals.

Mr HALL - Mr Mayor, you talked about Southwood. Has a location been determined yet for the final processing plant?

Mr ARMSTRONG - Yes.

Mr HALL - Where is it exactly?

Mr ARMSTRONG - It is 31 km from Huonville -

Mr HALL - Up the Glen Huon Road?

CHAIR - I might be able to help Mr Hall.

Mr ARMSTRONG - Yes, Paul.

CHAIR - When we reached the end of the visit this morning, at that T-junction you go left and you go out there about 12 km from Judbury and you'd be at the Southwood site.

Mr ARMSTRONG - There's an area been zoned there - a large area.

Mr HALL - That makes it a road of strategic importance without any doubt and I understand what the general manager was saying about the planning authority and being only able to place conditions upon the development application. At the council meeting the other night, did you formally voice your concerns?

Mr ARMSTRONG - We did.

Mr COCKERILL - Council passed a resolution that we strongly lobby the State Government with our concerns and the need to upgrade the road to suitable standards.

Mr HALL - That is all, thank you, Mr Chairman.

Mr BEST - Has there been no presentation, then, on access to Southwood apart from the original application that was on the other side of the river? I understand it got knocked off.

Mr ARMSTRONG - The original application was from North Huon Road and Lollara Road, and that was rejected by the Resource Planning and Development Commission. From what they have said now, all your finished product apart from the fibre will be coming out through Glen Huon Road.

Mr BEST - Was that part of the application? There is no access with the application?

Mr COCKERILL - Can I just answer the question. The development application that came to council showed the preferred route was via North Huon Road, Lollara Road out onto the Huon Highway, so that is north of Huonville. An action committee formed at Ranelagh strongly lobbied and made presentations to the Resource Planning and Development Commission. They ended up handing down a ruling that said that no fibre products or primary products could travel either way on North Huon Road or Lollara Road, that only finished product could be carted on Glen Huon Road, and it did not actually say where the fibre had to go out. There's only two other ways out and they are over the link road into the Derwent Valley or via Ledgerwood Road, Arve Road out through Geeveston. So the Southwood development application or planning permit that has been given precludes the wood fibres from coming out via North Huon Road; it precludes any processed product coming out via North Huon Road.

CHAIR - Processed product?

Mr COCKERILL - Yes. It means that everything will go via Glen Huon Road by default.

Mr BEST - I was interested to hear that. On the bus tour this morning the DIER representatives said that this is one option and maybe there are others but they haven't been discussed yet, so I just wondered how that fitted in. Obviously Glen Huon Road is the one that people are picking up on.

Mr COCKERILL - If you look at the most direct route from the Southwood site to Hobart, where we presume it has to get to whether it goes out via Bell Bay or Burnie or Hobart, the closest way to get onto the Huon Highway is via the Glen Huon Road. If you go via Ledgerwood Road to the Arve Road you have to go to Geeveston and then come back to

Huonville. If you were a business operator the logic is that you take the shortest route - every kilometre costs a dollar.

Mr ARMSTRONG - With the plantations that are now going in, especially in the Cradoc Hill area, north of Huonville and the Channel area of Bruny Island, all the product that is going to go to Southwood is going to travel down the Glen Huon Road and that is going to be a major input onto that road. There is going to be a huge volume of traffic when these plantations are up and running.

Mrs NAPIER - If I could follow up the traffic issue, as I understand it the council has some projections of likely traffic movements, even if they might have been estimated on the North Huon Road. I wonder if you have done an estimation whether that can be fairly transferred over to the Glen Huon Road as we calculate the future demand?

Mr COCKERILL - We could supply the information that came with the Southwood development application in relation to traffic movements and heavy vehicles and the like. You could then translate that to Glen Huon Road. We are happy to supply that information.

Mrs NAPIER - That would be appreciated. As I understand it, it is possible to separate the issue of fibre from processed product and other commercial traffic. It may not necessarily separate the issue of log traffic coming in. I would be happy for you to comment on that but could you indicate whether I am correct in thinking that the woodchip component was separately identified because of the nature of the trucks that were to be used.

Mr COCKERILL - Correct. The thing you will have to take into account in that is that those figures are quoting high-performance vehicles, which are B-doubles. One of the things that has been said, as I understand it, by the former minister was that there will be no B-doubles using Glen Huon Road, so it increases the number of vehicles that have to be used. You need to be careful of the type of vehicles.

Mrs NAPIER - Given the comment you made in relation to the log trucks that will be coming to service the needs of Southwood, does the council have projections on that and what the future growth will be?

Mr COCKERILL - No, I can only give you the Southwood projection figures on those.

Mrs NAPIER - Do your figures include an indication of the number of bus movements that are currently occurring on that particular road and is there any projection for increase or decrease? Are there more young children out there that are projected or is it an ageing community?

Mr COCKERILL - It is certainly not an ageing community. One of the impacts that the upgrading of this road will have is it will be a more desirable place to live in rural-residential. Fifty per cent of the Huon travel out of the area each day to work and they basically use it as a dormitory, I suppose, of Hobart. It is the rural-residentials, the hobby farmers that come. We will find an increased demand for rural-residential development in the Huonville and Glen Huon area, so the upgrade of this road will in fact serve as an attractor of more vehicle movements.

In relation to the school buses, I don't know. I think Harry Roberts would be able to answer your questions.

Mr ROBERTS - There are 14 bus movements a day.

CHAIR - We will take that on evidence later.

Mr ARMSTRONG - Mr Chairman, can I state one thing. Sue Napier asked about the fibre that is going out. We have to remember that Southwood in the long term is not to have fibre going out, so all the finished product would be coming through Glen Huon Road. That is the long-term plan of Southwood.

CHAIR - Any further questions, members?

Ms HAY - Just a choice, I guess. If you had to choose between having the road upgraded to the specifications that we have in front of us so that increases safety, as we have already been given evidence, or improving, say, the first 3 km only using the same amount of money and then not knowing when the other 7.39 km - and that is not even to Judbury - would be improved, what would you choose? That is what we are going to be faced with.

Mr ARMSTRONG - It is two-pronged. What I'd like to see, if it can't be upgraded from the Channel Highway to Judbury this year, is it staged over possibly four to five years to do the job properly. That is just my opinion; I don't know what the full council say to this. I would rather see it done properly in stages; I would not like to see just the first 2 km and then finished. I would like a rock-solid commitment that it was going to continue over the following years.

Ms HAY - And if that took 15 years?

Mr ARMSTRONG - Well, I'd prefer to see it done over a much shorter period -

Ms HAY - As we all would.

Mr ARMSTRONG - as we are going to have the Southwood project up and running, hopefully, within the next two to three years to its full capacity. I would like a commitment that it would be completed over the next four to five years.

Ms HAY - With the current allowance of funds from the State Government that is already over three years - that \$3 million - and we'd be increasing that significantly, so on the figures we have in front of us there is no way that would happen in four years.

Mr COCKERILL - Most things are political in this world and the allocation of funding is also political so, whilst they say they are committed four years in advance, it depends on the political masters as to where that funding is allocated each year. The Huon contributes a significant amount to the economic wealth of this island.

Mr ARMSTRONG - We are the second major exporter in the State of Tasmania, I believe - behind the west coast.

Mrs NAPIER - Could I ask a follow-up on the Alburys Road issue? Have you done an estimate of what the possible cost could be of upgrading that intersection?

Mr COCKERILL - The answer to that is no. At a delegation we had with Minister Cox and Minister Lennon, they did undertake to look at a design and costing on that junction. As yet we have not received that. There was also a request made that council might like to contribute to it - we didn't hear that request.

Mrs NAPIER - Can I ask - and you may not be able to answer this - one that took my attention was a little road called Cane's Road and a fairly sharp corner just before that if you're coming from the east. It is a real goat track up to the left and I believe it is called Canes Road. Has that been drawn to the council's attention? Is there interest in trying to straighten up that section or is it seen as being of lesser importance?

Mr COCKERILL - Our resolution said that the junctions of all council roads meeting with the highway need to be upgraded and the throats sealed.

Mrs NAPIER - I just wonder what is the actual status of Canes Road. It seemed to be a bit of a four-wheel drive track. Is it a local government road - it wouldn't be a State road - so what is the status of the road? Is it just a personal access road?

Mr COCKERILL - I'd need to seek some advice on that.

CHAIR - It's just a track. Council doesn't do anything with it - never has and never will.

Mr BEST - One final comment. I hear your comments about the economic aspect of the Huon Valley, but I think it is important to know that what we are being told with the categorisation of roads is that it is based very much on volume. I understand the figures that council has provided DIER, even with the Southwood project, still puts that road at category 5. That's important in the overall context; whilst we are talking about what is in the bucket and who is going to get funding, it is done on a statewide basis in relation to the categorisation of roads. I understand that the squeaky wheel gets the oil and no-one is going to take that away from you, but we also had that point put to us very strongly. I just wanted to make you aware of that particular issue and not discount the points that you have raised. We have to make a decision somewhere along the lines on what has been presented overall.

Mrs NAPIER - That is an interesting issue that although it is currently a category 5, if I interpret the office correctly, they were saying that some of the widening that was being proposed would take it close to that of a category 4 road. I guess my question was that if the North Huon Road was being redesigned as a category 4, why are we not now considering the redesign of the Glen Huon Road as a category 4? Has a request been made by council for it to be recategorised and has that been part of the deliberations?

Mr COCKERILL - We have not made a formal request for the reclassification. We did write to the minister requesting the pavement be increased to 7.4 m, which would have brought it to that.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

ALAN DUGGAN, PRESIDENT, HUON RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT GROUP, **ALAN ASHBARRY** AND **NEVILLE BENNETT** WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE JOINTLY EXAMINED.

DEPUTY CHAIR (Mr Hall) - In the absence of Mr Harriss, who is away for a short time, we will now resume.

Mr DUGGAN - Mr Chairman, our group, known as Southwood Supporters, supported this development. The matter of where the roads were going to go and what they were going to do was determined eventually by the Resource Planning and Development Commission.

My background is that I have been and still am a director of Duggan's Pty Ltd; until four years ago I was managing director of that company. The company has been going 75 years and in that time we have gained a lot of experience in what is happening in roads. Our business was transport in particular. We have used the State rail system, as it was then, quite significantly in projects in the north of the State - from Smithton to Hobart. We were the last ones to use the Maydena line from there to Hobart and from Maydena to Bell Bay.

My particular interest in this, Mr Chairman, is that the difficulty seems to revolve around the fact that the preferred route for the product to come away from Southwood was on what is now called North Huon Road. In their wisdom the Resource Planning Commission rejected that and said that the resource has to come out on an alternate road and Glen Huon Road was appropriate. Now we have to remember that Glen Huon Road is a public road; it is a State highway. It might have a category of 5, but that is because, as you would have seen today, of its neglect over 70 years. Some minor additions to the road in sections through Glen Huon have been filled in.

Alan Ashbarry is a research officer with Tas Community Association. We have two documents we want to give to you. One shows what the product is going to do, we need to take a little time to understand what Southwood is about, and the other document is the route out that is to be taken. Alan will give you those.

For ever and a day since our standard coast company shut down some 30 years ago, the products have been taken away from here and processed in other places and that processing has been limited to sawmill timber. The exception to that is some work that's been done and one of those we are going to hear from, Ric Watson, later in the day. He is the proprietor of the Huon sawmills at Glen Huon Road.

The concept of what to do and how to value-add has been a problem for a long time. The three major components of that are simply a regrowth sawmill - that development has been awarded to Neville Smith Timbers, a Victorian and Tasmanian-operated company that is very anxious to get on with the business. The other project is a rotary veneer milling which is a very vital part of veneering using timber in the round, as opposed to what happens at Boyer and used to happen on the north-west coast in sliced veneer. The third project of great significance is the production of power from the waste timber that would not be used for any other purpose at the site.

Those three units generate in the order of \$46 million a year annually, so it is not chicken feed. We believe - as you will see on the document where it says 'Today 2003 and 2007: what is proposed' - that the export wood fibre would disappear and there would be added to those projects three other items: the laminated veneer lumber, modified density fibre board and oriental strand board. The aim of our group is to promote these value-added products. They would generate, in our estimation, something like \$110 million annually from that area. It is huge. It is the most significant development in our district in a long time.

North Huon Road being the preferred route, the people in Glen Huon were rightfully upset; 'Why aren't we doing something about our road?' You saw it today. It is the same standard of road that used to operate from Huonville to Cygnet, which was an absolute disgrace. It was 15 to 16 feet wide. As we know, the minister then attended a meeting at Glen Huon and he made a commitment to upgrade that road to a width of 2-3 m pavements. In doing so, because the North Huon Road was still in the offing at that stage, he said that no B-doubles would traverse that road. In November when the Resource Planning Commission made their determination they determined that the North Huon Road wasn't an option but that all of the processed product could go down through that road. So in those figures on the other page there is something in the order of 90 000 tonne of processed product will come out of there annually.

Mrs NAPIER - What does that convert to in trucks?

Mr ASHBARRY - I will just quote from the Huon Valley Council's agenda of Monday 20 January:

'The Southwood centre is to create an additional 200 vehicle movements per day on the Glen Huon Road, including some 50 commercial vehicles each day.'

That is the 2003 vehicle traffic. That would increase with 2007 product coming online.

Mr DUGGAN - Very nearly as much product as I have mentioned will go in the Glen Huon Road or come out as raw log that will go directly to Triabunna as woodchip. Because of what has happened there has been some change in what the determination was going to be. Originally the whole of the timber going for fibre was to be woodchipped at the site. The Resource Planning Commission wouldn't accept that situation. It's like saying to you, 'If you were going to go to Hobart, go down to Cygnet and over to the Channel and through to Hobart that way.' - which is ridiculous. Or if you were going to go to Launceston, 'Go out to Bridport, up to Bell Bay and then into Launceston'. The direct route was not available. So there was a change and the only wood fibre that is going to be produced out there is what has been diverted. That diversion has to go in over the mountain into the Derwent Valley on the penny link, and that penny link was never designed to be an outlet. It is far too steep; it has a greater gradient than you have coming out of Hobart, if you remember what that it is. Whilst it is not bad in a good car, in a truck it's different altogether and you're down to the about 10-15 kph.

So we are faced with some changes of circumstances, but the real change was that in that determination the government did not direct the Department of Infrastructure, Energy

and Resources to change the specification. We've still got a 6 m road and the traffic is going to go down through there. All the unladen traffic, whether they be B-doubles or anything else, will return to Southwood, and that whole Picton-Arve Valley-Huon River area will go by that road. There is no way in the world you're going to get anyone to go around it; it is a public road and it will be a public road and it still will be used that way. So we have this dilemma that DIER were never given directions to upgrade the road from when that decision was made. That is where the whole thing is lacking.

We have had some hopping around from one foot to the other from officers this morning about why we haven't looked at various things. Can I give you some examples? The export road from Hampshire to Burnie, carrying about 1 000 000 tonnes of product, is 8 m wide. On part of that is a designated truck route which is 8 m wide. The road from Deloraine to Mole Creek is 8 m wide. The road that's going to be built from Launceston through Lilydale, right alongside a railway line, will be 8 m wide. No matter where we go we are seeing roads that are being constructed to something like Ausroad standard or one step below that, which is category 4. Perhaps we should tell the department that is 7 m wide and sealed. They might not know that; they certainly didn't give any indication what they were.

The Hampshire Road has a railway line fair through the middle of it that runs into Burnie and yet we've built a special truck route for most of it and then put a designated truck route on the last of it. This project at Southwood will generate more wealth than Hampshire - and I'm not trying to put Hampshire down. It is a very important facility that is producing about \$63 million worth of product a year, but the product exported and generated on the site out there will be in excess of \$100 million and we are fiddling around as to how wide we are going to have a piece of road.

Others will speak about the reasons for the road upgrade and what needs to be done. Can I mention one other road that some of you may or may not be aware of. We've got a very good road system that runs from Hobart to Huonville; we have a reasonable system that's over 7 m sealed that runs from Huonville to Geeveston but from Geeveston, to Dover it is a goat track. It is better than Glen Huon Road but it is still a goat track - you cannot travel at reasonable speed. There has needed to be an upgrade out of Dover, about 4 km short, at a place called Sledge Road. Sledge Road means nothing, Mrs Napier; it is just where the actual road started and Sledge Road used to come out, the same as Canes Road.

Mrs NAPIER - We might have a political rally down there some time.

Laughter.

Mr DUGGAN - Anyhow, the road was upgraded and they took exactly the same alignment that was established 60 or 70 years before. We built a road that went around in S's and in a modern car you are limited to a speed of 45 kph around a couple of corners. That is ridiculous in this day and age. A perfectly good road could be rebuilt, but where - on a similar alignment? If we were going to build a house or whatever the first thing we would do is site the house in the right position. There is a survey that is 30 years old that shows that the diversion of the road in an upgrade. Right in front of the property that we want to divert round was a tramway that used to come in there to what was known as the Potato Jetty. It didn't come in there for any other reason but to bring spuds and other

products in on a tramway. To go behind that is a different route that you would take and do because it makes more sense. Neville Bennett will speak about that in a moment.

My main concern is, Mr Chairman, to make comparisons of this road and other roads in this State of Tasmania and to make the point that a new road is going to be built, for which \$10 million is going to come from the Federal Government without any obligation, from Launceston through Lilydale to Scottsdale when there's a railway line alongside it and where there is an export road that runs from Scottsdale to Bridport to Bell Bay. It is a reasonably modern highway. There is a siding road without that. If we want to be ridiculous we could go up over the Diddleum Plains and down into the Fingal Valley. This is a project for the benefit of the Huon Valley and it needs the shortest route out. It needs, by the way, the ability to bring B-doubles down that road, simply for one reason: this State is in competition with every other state in Australia in what we produce. Just because we are a shorter distance we still have to do that in the most economical way possible.

I heard someone say this morning, 'Screaming B-doubles'. B-doubles don't scream, I can assure you. The difference between B-doubles - high performance vehicles - and normal vehicles is that they have to meet various standards before they are allowed to be used. The Department of Industry, Energy and Resources should know that too and in doing so they have to meet a noise standard and they have to have a braking standard of a 5 tonne truck. But when they do move, as Mrs Napier pointed out earlier, they are carrying a greater load and have a more responsible attitude as far as the truck itself is concerned. They are not allowed to use noisy engine brakes and various other things. So there is every reason to believe and expect that a project of this nature should have available to it a public road, be it in a total disgrace, available for traffic out of there and we are suggesting that 8 m is reasonable.

In the North Huon Road, that section from Judbury to Ranelagh was going to be 7 m of sealed road and 8 m to Lollara to the Huon Highway. The amount of money that was expected to cost - the DIER should know - was somewhere in the order of \$13 million. Now either the Government had the money or they didn't, and if they did have the money where the heck has it gone to now? Somehow or other we're determining what's going to happen on the Glen Huon Road because of CSR's maintenance program. Since when does CSR determine what is going to happen in Tasmania? CSR have a contract for maintenance. They have put forward a plan to do some maintenance upgrade and somehow or other DIER cannot renegotiate that contract. God help us if that's the case. Why can't we renegotiate a contract that is totally outside what CSR already had as a maintenance contract, now that it is determined that there needs to be a total upgrade of that road in alignment, vertical and horizontal?. If that can't be done, we're living in a nonsense world. I believe that can be done; I believe we should not be satisfied with what is happening.

I don't believe that this committee has any other choice in the circumstances. And may I add one other thing: to my knowledge Forestry Tasmania has provided DIER with all the other tonnages for the shipment on this road. If that is all that we have, the committee would have to reject the proposal and that would be a very sad thing. I don't believe that it should get to that at all and others who live on this road and understand it will also speak to you about it to give you a feeling as to what is necessary.

The Glen Huon Road is worn out. We are talking about rebuilding a road that will last 20 years. The road that is there has lasted 70 years. The reason that the traffic run off it and have accidents is because there is not very much of the road to stay on. I am not being funny about that; it is a very difficult thing to do. If you do not build a wide enough roadway, then what happens is that trucks have to move to the side and as soon as they do they break up the side of the road and you then have a continual maintenance program.

Mr Chairman, you would understand, on Mole Creek Road there is virtually nil maintenance since it was built, simply because it has some width. To suggest in this day and age that we are going to put a road in with two 3 m pavements when trucks themselves, with their mirrors, measure approximately 2.75 m - so there is a little gap in the middle that we're supposed to meet on. All that is going to happen is that we are going to break up the existing pavement that is put down. To suggest it can be done under a maintenance program is about as ridiculous a suggestion as I have heard in a long time. I really would put to the committee and the government members who may be part of it that this is nothing less than a disgrace.

Mr Chairman, I will ask Neville to present what he sees of it. Alan Ashbarry is here to deal with other matters.

Mr BENNETT - Mr Chairman, I have lived on that road for 34 years.

DEPUTY CHAIR - You are a resident there?

Mr BENNETT - Yes, 30 m the other side of where Albury and Benders roads meet. I used to live where the road leaves the water - about 2.5 km up. For people to turn around and say that there a no accidents on that road is quite ludicrous. When I lived up there we had 17 accidents in the first 13 years on that corner - I finished up with cars on my lawn. Where I am now, I have been there for 21 years and there have been seven there - three in the last 12 months. One was where a child got knocked off his bike, right at the end of Albury-Benders road. There was almost one there the other night and it was only good luck that it never happened. I was standing at the letterbox watching it happen. The way you come out and the car coming the other way; one wanted to come out and one wanted to go in. The bloke who wanted to go in was supposed to go in the top way but it was impossible because of the way the road is designed there. For people to say there have been no accidents is ridiculous.

Someone at the meeting the other day said there was 40 m between those pegs. If that is correct, how can you put a 40 m boundary on a piece of road between a house and a river that's only got 25 m? Between Francis Roberts' house and the edge of the river is 25 m and that is where they are proposing to put the road. There is one large tree between 2-3 m through it. You all travelled on the road this morning; you should travel on the river and have a look at the undermining. If that tree goes, it is going to take half the road with it, and if it does that then you've got five houses in that line but nowhere to put a road. That is why I think we should get away from that river and get up the back where there is no traffic, no entrances. By putting that road through there you do away with six corners, seven entrances to houses and you have no movement of power lines. If you go by the river and that tree goes, it takes half the road and they've got nowhere to put a road back. What inconvenience is that going to cause to the district? Then they will

have to turn around and say, 'We've got to go up the back now because we've got nowhere else to put the road'. It is just a matter of commonsense. If you can do away with six corners, no power lines to be moved, no services affected, all those houses don't have to worry about traffic coming onto the road on a bad corner because if you have a house on this corner and a house on that side and a right-angle corner, where do you go - onto a person's lawn? As far those trees and everything else they talk about, what is more important: people's lives or trees? They said this morning you were talking about moving the power lines. All you are doing is encroaching on people's lawns. If you bring the roads close to a house, any of those children playing near the houses have less room and more chance of getting run over - for the sake of seven trees on that side of the road where there are no houses. I think people should start to use some commonsense. If you are going to talk about seven trees and putting a road on three more houses' lawns where people are going to be closer to the road, it is just ludicrous.

The mayor said this morning that if he had his choice about spending x amount of dollars on one section or putting it all on the rest, if you talk to 90 per cent of the people out there they'll say the same as I will: let us do the road. I don't care if it takes five or 10 years; let us do it properly! As Alan said, this 6 m seal is ridiculous. When you see the accidents and kids getting run over on their bikes because the trucks cannot get off the road and the cars can't see them because of the corners, it is time something was done.

They say there is no money. Are tourists more important than people down here? They can spend it on buying ferries, they can spend it on doing roads elsewhere. Now they are going to upgrade or seal the Cradle Mountain Road. The money just popped up for that from somewhere. The portfolio has been changed for the member for parliament for the roads and it's gone back up there, hasn't it? I am not getting into politics but it was said earlier this morning that it's all about politics. Let us start worrying about people's lives and the safety of people. It is like any department - if you're in business and people are working for you you have a duty of care to those people. I think the Government has a duty of care to the people of the Huon with this road. Until we get that through to them we are not going to do any good. If someone gets killed because of that road, with insurance the way it is today, everyone suing everyone for the least little thing - you don't hear of many people suing because of the road conditions, but it will happen. Why build a road where you don't have the room at the river's edge? It is no use saying that there have been no accidents there because since I've been there there have been 24 in 30 years - and a couple of them were fatalities. One truck went in the river just before I moved there, and that was a fatality. There was no safety fence then and the road wasn't wide enough. When people finish up on your front lawn because of road conditions I think it is time something was done.

Mrs NAPIER - I have a question following up on the accidents. Are you indicating that in the areas that you have identified - and presumably it's Alburys Road and that realignment where you have suggested it be taken back from the river -

Mr BENNETT - Yes, where it first leaves the river to go up over the bank.

Mrs NAPIER - What is that called? They tell me every bump's got a name.

Mr BENNETT - Roberts' corner, we call it. It is where the road goes down to the river flats.

Mrs NAPIER - Is that the area where the accidents are occurring?

Mr BENNETT - Yes, and at Albury-Benders Road, and also at Mikulski's corner where Mr Woolley and his wife almost got killed. So you've got Mikulski's corner, that bend and Albury-Benders. By going where we are asking them to go - through Mr Roberts' property - you'd do away with six corners and seven driveways and no power lines to be touched.

Mrs NAPIER - How many of those bends would that do away with where accidents have occurred?

Mr BENNETT - It will do away with the main bend that I am talking about, where they had the 17 accidents, and it will also do away with the five bends prior to that.

Mrs NAPIER - How many kilometres would it no longer be part of the Glen Huon Road if you relocated it.

Mr BENNETT - It would be approximately, I would say, 1 200-1 400 to go around that way and it would be approximately a kilometre to go straight, so you are eliminating a distance. You are straightening your road and you are getting away with all the services, houses, the river issue, everything - you are getting away with the lot. I worked for the Hydro for 25 years and I know there is a big cost in moving the hydro poles.

Mrs NAPIER - Yes. Just for future reference, what are we calling this part of the relocation project?

Mr BENNETT - Well, you can call it the 'clay bank' area, if you like; I think would cover it.

Mr DUGGAN - Through Mr Roberts' property.

Mr BENNETT - This corner we are talking about, you have five houses in a row encroaching off that road. There is only 25 m between the houses and the river and you have five driveways, and if someone misses they are either going to get shoved in the river or killed. I was at a meeting on Monday night and every one of those houses had a submission in saying they are prepared to go through the back of their property and wishing the road to go through there because they know the situation. That means everyone has the same view.

Mr BEST - Could I just ask, Mr Chairman, what space is there, though? We saw a bus contractor there this morning; there is plenty of space between the back of the bus operator, is there?

Mr BENNETT - There would be about 80 m between the back of Francis' house and your shed?

Mr ROBERTS - Yes.

Mr BENNETT - You would have 80 to 90 m between the back of the houses and the main bus operator's shed. There used to be a house there but that has even been moved now so

you have no houses on the property. The only thing is you would have the big poplar there behind McMullens - one willow tree. I think that is about it; the rest of it is just clear paddock. Would I be correct in saying that, Harry?

Mr ROBERTS - Pretty right.

Mr BENNETT - One poplar tree and that's it. You've got a straight run from Mikulski's corner. There's Lanes, Oosts, Howards, McMullens, Roberts and Elwells; all those driveways are going onto that cul-de-sac, so there are seven houses that you haven't got coming onto a main highway.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Thank you, Mr Bennett.

Mr ASHBARRY - I will be very quick just to finish up. From the research I've done and talking to people on the road, it is clear that the road is in need of an upgrade for safety. What we are arguing is we would like to see that upgrade go more than what is proposed. People along the road have come up with some fairly innovative specific areas to address problems which we feel could be done in a fairly cost effective manner.

We have actually approached the minister and said we would like to go further. He's done a preliminary estimate of doing the whole length of the road to a category 4 standard rather than a category 5, as in what the Huon Council were saying earlier this morning. His preliminary estimate is an additional \$16 million, which makes it a very expensive road - in total \$22 million if you include the cost of the current proposal. We don't believe that it needs the additional \$16 million by targeting specific examples. For example, this corner that we have just talked about, the Harry Roberts' depot, the Albury Road intersection, the intersection at the Huon Highway and perhaps some other improvements that have been identified in submissions.

Mrs NAPIER - Can we just run through those again. The Harry Roberts' realignment or reconstruction -

Mr ASHBARRY - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - The connection with the highway, the Albury intersection or whatever it is called, and did you say another one?

Mr ASHBARRY - Yes, I did but I didn't write down which one it was.

Mr DUGGAN - There are small alignments further on past the Huon Cemetery, I think. Past the Huon Cemetery there is a turn to the left and to the right. There is a section through there, Mrs Napier, that wants an upgrade - and through what is known as the Horseshoe bend.

Mrs NAPIER - I recall the chairman of the committee talking about Horseshoe bend. Before we leave that, in the preliminary estimate were you provided with an indication of what any one of those projects would cost, or was that just a global figure?

Mr DUGGAN - A frightening figure, I think, was the answer.

Mr ASHBARRY - It was very much a global figure and it was prefaced with the comment that no detailed design work had been done.

Mrs NAPIER - I must admit, I had been told it was likely to cost \$20 million.

Mr DUGGAN - Can I just read this paragraph? It is signed by the minister, Mr Cox:

'I have been advised by the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources that the additional work has been estimated without the benefit of specific design information but has been valued at a further \$16 million to the current project cost. The latter two projects carry the bulk of this additional cost.'

So there has really been someone deciding that this \$16 million will frighten them for ever and a day. It is not a realistic figure, I think, and they excuse it by saying that there is no detailed design involved.

Mrs NAPIER - Within that figure, there was no indication how much could be asked of CSR, given that they are putting \$3.8 million into this particular project of \$6.8 million, and the State Government \$3 million?

Mr DUGGAN - No. They say 'additional to' what was already going to be expended.

Mr ASHBARRY - Just to add to that, part of it may be that the maintenance contract only covers the existing road alignment, so if you move the road alignment those funds that the maintenance contractor would use would not be available. So that is probably a consideration as well.

Mrs NAPIER - Not wanting to give up part of their contract.

Mr ASHBARRY - No. The other issue was that during the Huon Valley Council's development application process they did receive a number of representations on that proposal, which were included in the agenda of the last meeting of the council. There were 11, and six of those were in relation to relocating the road at Harry Roberts's corner. All were supportive of upgrading the road, pointing out improvements such as the Albury Road intersection et cetera. Whilst not addressed to the committee, I believe the committee perhaps should consider the issues raised by people who responded to the development application.

DEPUTY CHAIR - You can tender that as evidence, if you would.

Mr BENNETT - Can I add one point, Mr Chairman? When they thought about doing something I rang up the department and got onto a bloke by the name of Peter Douglas. I offered a proportion of my land as a site office. I said they could have the land - it had power, phone, water. I told them I didn't want anything for it because, as with most people on that road, they just want something done. The next-door neighbour said now they have different ways of doing their farming, like silage. He's got two big silage pits - they are enormous holes - he said if there is any overburden they can put anything they like in that and fill it up. He said he had plenty of land where they can put excess as landfill. People are going out of their way so that it doesn't have to cost a lot of money to

transport fill and everything a long way away. People within the district on that road really want to do something to get a decent road out of it and are helping as much as they can. It is not a situation where you could say that people are trying to make a dollar out of it or people are trying to get what they can out of it. People are legitimately trying to help to get something decent done.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Thank you very much, gentlemen, for your input.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.

Mr HARRY ROBERTS, BUS OPERATOR, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

DEPUTY CHAIR (Mr Hall) - Mr Roberts, you may proceed.

Mr ROBERTS - You know my name. I am a bus operator and I have been a bus operator for 20-something years now. As I said, there are 14 bus movements a day down this way, backwards and forwards.

I think what has been said is that what we need is to get the road on the right alignment. I know in my submission I said 8 m, but I think if we had somewhere near 7 m that would be all right so long as we didn't have corners and humps and what not to negotiate. With busing you have a duty of care for which we don't get paid but we get castigated if we fall down. That duty of care means that the better road I can get the less duty of care I will be up for.

We had an instance at Cygnet. We had to extend the run through Cygnet - this was a matric run - and we used to drive in the top end, which was actually the exit end, and drive out the bottom end. You can go in and out the bottom end, that is not a problem. We asked the council and DIER for permission to put a sign up to say 'Buses accepted' so that we could drive in the top end because when we get to the parking area all the students get off - which is, say, 30 or something like that - and all their parents are waiting there to pick them up and they don't have to cross the road. But now we're not allowed to drive in there. We solved that problem in some regard because you have to tell each student as they get off to watch while crossing the road. What we have now done is use the PA system and we just say, 'Watch while crossing the road' just once so we've got the evidence to say that we've told them. This might seem a little thing to you but it has happened before. It happened in Queensland where that girl got killed and the driver didn't tell her to watch while crossing the road and he's gone for a row.

As far as Roberts', the area that we're talking about where these houses are around the back, there are seven poles and three struts that wouldn't need to be removed if the road went through our paddock - not only ours but some of McMullen's and some of Brendan Reading's. Actually I think the whole thing has been covered fairly well today. Are there any other questions you would like ask to answer?

Mr BEST - I was just going to say that I think that's an important point you make about duty of care. My father is a bus operator and I know exactly what you are talking about with children getting off buses and I understand the importance of that.

Mr ROBERTS - Something I didn't understand is what is going to be done with the Benders Road intersection?

Mrs NAPIER - Benders Road?

Mr ROBERTS - Albury and Benders, sorry. It branches when it gets up to our house.

DEPUTY CHAIR - We could refer that to the department when they come back to talk to us.

Mrs NAPIER - Mr Roberts, in relation to proposed bus stations, pick-up spots, that have been designed into the current road, excepting your comments in relation to the preferred 7 m paving realignment, are the bus stations acceptable to you?

Mr ROBERTS - Yes, by and large. Actually we got them put in a number of years ago and I think it was when MAIB got \$1 million or something and we got a number, I think about four, put in on that road between Huonville and Judbury. But other than that, it has been a battle. What happens is you will have a number of students from a given area and then they dry up and they appear somewhere else, so the stops are not necessarily permanent.

Mrs NAPIER - I accept that.

Mr ASHBARRY - Excuse me, Mr Chairman, could I just add two quick things. One is in relation to the last question which you asked Harry. Part of the difficulty we've had is access to detailed planning for this road. We, as a community group, haven't had the access to a document or submission, although the council did have a development application which we could interpret and make comment on and which has been the basis, I suppose, of written and verbal evidence that we have given. The remarks that Harry has just made about the bus locations is prefaced on the fact that he hasn't seen the detailed design that is included in that document. It's only based on what he understands is the location.

Mrs NAPIER - So, Mr Roberts, you haven't had an opportunity to see the detailed road designs of where those bus stations actually are?

Mr ROBERTS - No.

Mrs NAPIER - Is it your understanding - and I have yet to check myself, I'll ask the department, I suppose - that those bus stations are in the same places - the one we were talking about on page 16, the one that was going to be in a road intersection and has now been repositioned - was it your understanding they were in the same positions?

Mr ROBERTS - Is that at the end of Albury and Benders Road?

Mrs NAPIER - Yes, I presume so.

Mr ROBERTS - Mr Bennett and I had a meeting about 10 days ago with Mr Cox and we were actually there at that intersection and he promised us that that intersection wouldn't remain there but it would be moved down the road virtually in front of Mr Bennett's drive and it would come down through our paddock. As I say, I haven't seen the plans, and that would have to be updated. He also told us - and I didn't bring this up, it was Mr Bennett about the dam at Harry Roberts' paddocks - he said, 'We'll do that in a couple of years', but I think that is a none-core promise. I can't see it happening.

Mrs NAPIER - Life is about perceptions and politics. I think you're right.

Mr ASHBARRY - The other one we raised was just the perception of the capacity of the road. As Harry transports the children on his buses there has been a lot of controversy in the past between the adequacy of roads where commercial traffic - log trucks and high performance vehicles - have been and buses. So it is a perception rather than a technical issue. I think if the road is not upgraded to wider than 6 m, even though technically it may have the capacity to take all the traffic, say, from Southwood the public perception will still be that there is a conflict in traffic use which will most likely cause controversy but also a concern by local users with the transport of their children.

Mrs NAPIER - Could I ask Mr Roberts what are the hours during which your school buses are operating on that road?

Mr ROBERTS - We start at Judbury at 6.55 a.m. and come to Huonville, and we start at Huonville and go back at about 4.45 p.m. Ray Griggs and Sacred Heart have another small bus that goes up - and that is only a coaster - they are later in the day and they come earlier. Ray comes down there at about 8.30 -

Mrs NAPIER - In the morning?

Mr ROBERTS - In the morning. Then he has another bus that goes back up to Glen Huon because the primary school here at Huonville is overcrowded and they have room at Glen Huon so they are carting the students back up to Glen Huon from Huonville instead of building more schools at Huonville, which makes sense because they have the room up there. He has another two bus trips to take them back. He goes up at about 8.45 a.m. to Glen Huon and comes back at about 2.45 p.m. and then he turns around and goes back up to Lonnvale.

Mrs NAPIER - And that trip takes about an hour?

Mr ROBERTS - No, that only takes about 15 minutes.

Mrs NAPIER - Has there been any discussion of a moratorium on truck movements on the road at the same time as school buses are operating, as occurs currently on the Bridport to Scottsdale road?

Mr ROBERTS - Yes. We had a call from Forestry on Monday to ask what our times were.

Mrs NAPIER - So that currently exists?

Mr ROBERTS - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - Is it your understanding that that would continue to exist after this road's program?

Mr ROBERTS - I don't know what arrangement they are coming to over that.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Just to clarify that: you had a call from Forestry but you don't know -

Mr ROBERTS - They just want to work out some sort of a program, I imagine. They would have called the other operators, I suppose.

Mrs NAPIER - As I recall, a school bus moratorium was part of the north Huon Road formula even at 8 m.

Mr ROBERTS - We meet log trucks now. I did have one scrape about six years ago, and Ray Briggs has had one hit, too - both on Horseshoe bend.

Mrs NAPIER - Was that reported through police records or transport records?

Mr ROBERTS - Ours wasn't; I don't know about Ray's.

Mrs NAPIER - When did they occur?

Mr ROBERTS - As I said, mine was six or seven years ago. I don't know how far back Ray's was. Ray's was very close to the same time, but he had more damage done than I did.

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN - Thank you very much, gentlemen, for your efforts.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

RICK WATSON, MANAGER, HUON VALLEY TIMBER PTY LTD WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

DEPUTY CHAIR (Mr Hall) - Thank you for coming along, Mr Watson. The forum is yours.

Mr WATSON - Thank you, Mr Chairman. As you aware, my name is Rick Watson. I am a sawmiller in the Huon Valley sawmill at 300 Glen Huon Road. We employ 10 people in the sawmilling part of our business, including three of my sons. I don't know whether it is known to people here but we have six or seven B-doubles a week coming into our sawmilling operation, so there are B-doubles running on the Glen Huon Road. When Mr Lennon was at the second meeting announcing that he was giving the go-ahead for the upgrade of the Glen Huon Road, he gave me a verbal promise that we would be exempt and that B-doubles would continue to run to our sawmilling operation. He also indicated at that time that we needed something done about the entrance to the mill to facilitate trucks coming in and out of 300 Glen Huon Road, such as a slip over the side for trucks to pull into for crossing over the road. We have quite a lot of difficulty getting trucks out of there. They have to put their nose right across the other of the road and sometimes back up to get their semitrailers out with loaded timber on, so it is a difficult access in and out of the sawmill.

Mrs NAPIER - So this is the first one we came to on the right-hand side - the river side?

Mr WATSON - Yes. We do have a lot of difficulty getting trucks in and out of the mill with the road situation the way it is now. There is a big culvert head that they have to negotiate around which is right up close to the bitumen edge on the road and they have to make sure they can drag their trailer around that. As I said, Mr Lennon's commitment to me verbally in front of other witnesses was that he was exempting B-doubles, that they could continue to run, and that he would do something about making our access easier.

In addition to the sawmill, we have a chip plant down the bottom of the mill yard which my brother runs. It has a licence to produce 25 000 tonne of chip a year, so you have 25 000 tonne of raw material coming into the mill, probably more than that actually, or up to 25 000 tonne on the licence that is currently in place going out.

Mrs NAPIER - That is not a residue from the sawmill; that's a separate operation?

Mr WATSON - Some of it is residue from the sawmill and some is just carted there, and we chip from all the other sawmills in the Huon Valley as well so that the residue doesn't have to be carted through Hobart on semitrailers, as a safety thing. I think we have about eight other sawmills so we've got a lot of little trucks as well coming back with sawmill residue coming in and out of the mill yard from as far away as Dover and Geeveston and two more sawmills which are located at Lonnavele out past Judbury.

DEPUTY CHAIR - How many truck movements a year? Have you a rough idea of that?

Mr WATSON - We'd create probably 10 truck movements at least a day.

Mrs NAPIER - Ten in and 10 out?

Mr WATSON - Yes, 10 in and 10 out.

Mr BEST - So these truck movements are all coming from the turn-off at the bridge into -

Mr WATSON - No, some of them are coming from up the valley.

Mr BEST - Some of them are coming from Judbury -

Mr WATSON - Yes, some of the logs are coming from Judbury and some of the logs are coming from Huonville and the same with the mill base - coming from both ways.

Mr BEST - Is this B-doubles, though?

Mr WATSON - The B-doubles are coming from Huonville way so they don't go past our sawmill.

Mr BEST - Okay, so it's just that front entry?

Mr WATSON - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - How many kilometres up that road are you?

Mr WATSON - Three - number 300, Glen Huon Road. Some of that movement comes out from the chipper. All the movement comes out of Golf Course Road which is 150 to 200 m on the Huonville side of our mill. So you have two entries; you've got the Golf Course Road entrance to the chipper and the next entrance further along, and that rise in the road there is a significantly dangerous spot. I sit there and shudder when I see somebody coming from Glen Huon pulling into our mill and somebody overtaking him right at the mill entrance over the brow of that little hill. For 200 m back past our mill there is a definite blind spot on the Huonville side towards Albury/Benders Road - there's a little dip in the road there which creates a complete blind spot. You've got cars going up over the little rise at the end of Golf Course Road and traffic coming the other way and the traffic passing is on the wrong side of the road. I don't know how many times I've seen a near mishap there, but quite a few times when I have been standing out at the road edge. I am saying that that hump really needs addressing. You have a major intersection of movement for trucks and semitrailers and log trucks and B-doubles converging in and out off the road there. That is the horizontal alignment that everybody is talking about and that's one place that hasn't been mentioned but it does have quite a dangerous little rise there that creates a blind spot.

We have additional value-adding plans for the sawmill in dry timber and processing that will create more movements in and out of the sawmill over the next couple of years.

Mrs NAPIER - So you haven't got that yet?

Mr WATSON - We're not actually into processing dried timber at the moment but we've got a lot of timber ready to start doing that. We took the sawmill over eight years ago as a

green mill and it has since operated as green but we've gradually stockpiled timber ready to go into value-adding.

Mrs NAPIER - So you're about to build drying kilns and so on?

Mr WATSON - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - Are they there yet?

Mr WATSON - No.

Mrs NAPIER - What's your time projection for that?

Mr WATSON - Hopefully, this year. I have driven trucks on that road for the last 30 years, including log trucks, having been a logging contractor myself, and tip trucks and timber trucks over a 30 year period. It has been an appalling road to have put up with for that length of time. Most of the time in a truck you are driving with your front and your back wheel over the shoulder of the road off the edge of the bitumen as it is now. As Alan mentioned, we don't want to have a new road and have it too narrow and break up the shoulder of the road again because we have to drive on the shoulder of the road, even with a 6 m road, to safely pass heavy trucks.

I'd definitely have some concerns about Horseshoe Bend. If we're going to have the volume of trucks that we're talking about coming down that road then Horseshoe Bend has to be completely straightened. It's a 40 feet drop straight into the river. I don't know whether you stopped and had a look but it's a sheer drop where that old wire rope goes around - straight into the river off there. It is not appropriate for it to be like that.

The end of Lane's Road, which hasn't been addressed probably because we haven't been talking about that section of road, that has another hump and blind spot in it. It is a slippery gravel road with a steep descent out onto the bitumen. I have slipped on it at times. Even if you are going slowly and go to stop, the loose gravel lets you slide out onto the bitumen and you've got cars coming at 100 kms an hour over the blind hump and you haven't got time to back back. So that needs some kind of address there as far as horizontal alignment goes. There is a little hump in the road where, as the car goes onto the hump, the road turns slightly. We regularly see cars, because there is no indication, come over the hump and keep driving in a straight line so they are actually crossing over onto the wrong side of the road as they go over the hump. Numerous times people have had to swerve and take action to stop an action on that hump. One of the reasons why I am particularly concerned about the end of Lane's Road is because I have a son and his wife and grandchildren living on the road and I shudder to think what might happen to them as they come out onto that road junction.

If the Government was so keen to spend the amount of money they were going to to upgrade the Ranelagh-Judbury road to the standard that they were, then surely we are entitled to an equal standard of road.

DEPUTY CHAIR - That is the \$13 million you are referring to, on the north Huon Road?

Mr WATSON - Yes. Because we are going to take the brunt of now and use our road as the access road, surely we are entitled to the same as they were. I don't care where the money comes from, it is there somewhere to be had. They can find it for other projects. They can squabble and argue about it and eventually come up with it but we need the road built to a proper standard.

I rang Forestry yesterday to see what logging activity was going on in the upper part of the Huon. They indicated to me that there are five logging contractors working out in that area at the moment. One is producing 30 000 tonne of wood a year, another is producing 20 000 tonnes and another is producing 40 000 tonnes, and there is a small contractor - my brother's boy - who is producing two loads of logs a day. So even now we have a considerable amount of log trucks running down that road.

DEPUTY CHAIR - All that traffic you are referring to there comes along the Glen Huon Road? Does any of that go along the North Huon Road?

Mr WATSON - No, they are not allowed. They've got bridge weight restrictions on the North Huon Road.

In talking to Forestry, they told me that there is another contractor very shortly who will be moving out into the Denison-Russell valley area who will be producing 80 000 tonne of wood a year with a cable operation. You are talking about 10 loads of logs a day just from that one contractor; 20 movements a day backwards and forwards. We are talking about probably in a month or six weeks' time. People in here are probably not aware that there is that much activity already on the Glen Huon Road. Besides that, there are other contractors working up in the Picton where the shortest route would be to come down the river, over the new bridge at the Southwood site, continue down the Weld Road, over the Denison Hill and down the Glen Huon Road, but the Forestry, to try to keep some of the political pressure off the situation at the moment, are diverting those trucks back out through Legerwood - which is longer, steeper haul - back through Geeveston and down through Huonville. So we have the potential for more contractors, if it wasn't going to kick up a stink, to be coming down the Glen Huon Road right at this moment.

Mrs NAPIER - Of those logging contractors who are out there, are they going out via the Arve or are they coming down the Glen Huon Road?

Mr WATSON - Four of the contractors that I have mentioned are coming down the Glen Huon Road at the moment. There are a couple more in the Picton area, above the AirWalk, who would be coming down the new road to the Arve River, over the new bridge on the Arve. The most sensible way would be to cross over the new bridge on the Huon over where the Southwood site is and come down through Judbury and out onto Glen Huon Road. That would be the shortest flat route; all they would have to do is climb up the bit of new road over the Denison hills, but they are being redirected to try to keep everybody happy. They are being redirected out through Legerwood into the back of Geeveston, which is a steep haul up out of there and the longer route. There is potential right at this moment for even more traffic to be on the Glen Huon Road.

Mrs NAPIER - If this road were developed to at least a category 4 road and all this traffic was openly allowed through there, what would be the public reaction to that, or would we end up with another Ranelagh?

Mr WATSON - A lot of people are saying that they wanted the road upgraded a little to make it a bit safer to use, but their reason for saying that was that they didn't realise that a lot of this traffic has an open right to use the road. If trucks are going to be carting finished product, you can't stop them using a public road. The people didn't realise that; they thought that automatically everything from Southwood would be stopped and it would be a light-vehicle traffic access road. Now they have found out - and even people who were involved in the committee and got this all started - that these semitrailers are going to be allowed to use the road, they have changed their mind. They want a big road now because they can't stop the traffic, so they want the best they can get. Where we had people who were going to push to stop it, we have those people coming on side now. They want the best they can get because they know they're going to live with the trucks anyway. The trucks are entitled by law to use the road.

I can't add much more than that, just so long as we are fully aware that, in addition to Southwood, the Forestry has told me that over a period of time they're going to be concentrating on logging in the Denison and Russell region and this will come through the Glen Huon Road.

DEPUTY CHAIR - And even from where we drove up to Judbury we could see a lot of plantations back to the west as well.

Mr WATSON - Yes, there are heaps of plantations coming on.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Thank you very much, Mr Watson.

THE WITNESS WITHDREW.

PETER TODD AND STUART HUGHSON WERE RECALLED AND RE-EXAMINED.

DEPUTY CHAIR (Mr Hall) - Gentlemen, given the evidence we have heard, is there anything you would like to clarify at this stage?

Mr TODD - It is pretty hard to recap all that evidence. I will just clarify the issue of the B-doubles. It is correct that B-doubles will not be allowed as a through route but there has been an undertaking given that current access will be allowed.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Mr Todd, I have a question in respect to the road width. From experience in local government with narrow seals, it has inevitably caused councils a problem. The road verges break away, as suggested, with heavy vehicles. When I was involved the council moved right away from that concept. What is your view on this particular width that you have here in light of the heavy vehicles that you are going to have there?

Mr TODD - There are many other roads of this width around the State with heavy vehicles on them. Yes, there may be some impact on the edges but I believe 6 m will, in the main, be adequate in terms of protecting the edges. There may be some local issues which can be addressed but I think overall 6 m is enough. There are many other roads around the State where 5.6 m is not an uncommon width which are carrying commercial vehicles. The edges aren't a major problem on those roads. Notwithstanding, there are some tight curves on this road and the 6 m will give us a little bit more of a margin there.

Mr BEST - There have been a couple of comments made that surely there is a possibility that there is money to broaden the project. Obviously you are more conversant with what the program is and I heard you mention something before about there being a four-year program. I just wondered if you would reiterate that?

Mr TODD - The Government has committed to a four-year program and prior to the previous election the Government did make an announcement on the future road projects that would be funded over that period of time during the next term of government. It has committed those funds and they are available so I guess that answers your question - that's what I was getting at.

Mr BEST - One other argument that has been put today is that surely a similar amount should be spent on another road - I think it was about \$13 million or something that was spent. I'm not sure what that referred to, but it was upgraded.

Ms HAY - It could have been spent.

Mr BEST - It could have been spent, but even if you were to look at that figure you would be looking at anything up to possibly eight or nine to 12 years on what money is available -

Mr TODD - Do you mean if we did it in a staged process?

Mr BEST - Yes. Are you looking at a fairly lengthy time frame or -

Mr TODD - I would think so based on current budgets, that's correct. Nobody knows beyond the current roads program what the future commitment would be. I can't say that; it is up to government to make those sorts of decisions, but if you are talking about \$1 million a year and you do the maximum upgrade that people would like it, it would take 20 years. That is the sort of figure you are looking at. This project is about the \$3 million but there is a lot of other money going in through the maintenance contractor to rehabilitate the pavement as well so, in effect, it's almost a \$7 million project in terms of rehabilitation of the existing pavement. So if you add that to the cost of all those additional things - and it would be nice to do - it would take a long to pay at that sort of rate. But I can't say what might be in a future roads program.

Mr BEST - Just on the categorisation, category 5, I know we haven't got the actual guidelines - we have some guidelines and we've been looking at those - but the reason it's a category 5 is the traffic. Is that right?

Mr TODD - And the function the road is serving. The State road actually goes from Huonville to Judbury and then it becomes a local road so this project is just considering that and so it's not a through-road in terms of a State highway whereas other roads tend to be more connecting so I guess that has influence on why it has been a category 5 - it is the traffic volumes and the function it's performing. That's not to say it is an unimportant road. It is still a State road, it is not a local road, but it just helps to be able to give some targets as to where we are heading with the road categories.

On that target there, I have a recollection now that a category 4 talks about a 2.75 m lane -

Mr BEST - That's right.

Mr TODD - It depends a bit on traffic so -

Ms HAY - Depending on usage, up to 3.0.

Mr TODD - Yes, so we're up around that target anyway.

Mr BEST - Yes.

Mr TODD - With regard to cross-section, I'm not talking about alignment.

Mr BEST - What about the point about the economic aspect? Is that anything to do with categorisation? Surely, it would do, I suppose, because if it was higher economically you would think more traffic.

Mr TODD - Yes, that's right - one follows the other.

Ms HAY - Today we have heard that most people would like at least a category 4 road but even that isn't a 7 m or an 8 m road, so we're looking at much different parameters there.

Mr TODD - That would be right. You are really looking at probably a category 2, I would guess, in recalling those figures.

Mrs NAPIER - I keep coming back I guess to this section of traffic and we are hearing that we're going to have an additional 25 trucks a day with the contracts that Forestry have provided and whilst we might accept that if Southwood happens - and of course we hope it does - that some of those trucks wouldn't be coming down that road with unprocessed timber, it's likely to be swung across to the Southwood project, I can't help but see a road that has a highly intense ratio of commuter, trucking, commercial transport and school buses. The incidence of houses up in that area seems fairly thick. I come back again to this issue of saying that it seems to me that this road and this district seem to be changing and there would be a case for reclassification from 5 to 4, which would take in the issue of what the strength of pavement needs to be, the width of the pavement and presumably it would increase the significance of the alignment issues - whether you do it through black spot programs or whether you do it through something else. Just hearing the evidence today, it tends to suggest that we have a fairly dangerous mix that we are projecting could start happening now, if it is not already happening, but certainly be compounded over the next few years. This money only last for three years and it is minimal stuff.

Mr TODD - I will try to cover those points. The pavement design might change. That will be dependent on what category the road is because it will be designed to carry the number of commercial axles that will run over the road in 20 years.

Mrs NAPIER - If you know what the number of movements are going to be.

Mr TODD - But you can get a really good estimate and you count it in millions of axles over a 20-year period, so it might be two or three million standard axles that you might design the pavement for. That would have to be calculated.

On the issue of the width, I think we are getting pretty close to a class 4 anyway. I am not sure whether moving from a 5 to a 4 would change very much about what happened to the road or not. I am not sure whether that is really the issue. I think we are getting pretty close with the width already, to move it to a 4. I think the matter of whether it is a 4 or 5 would be a matter of the function it was performing. If the traffic volumes did go up, it may then be appropriate to change to a 4.

Mrs NAPIER - Is it not true that the standards of the smoothness of the road, the issue of alignment, be it vertical or otherwise, would become more stringent with a category 4 road than a category 5?

Mr TODD - Certainly the roughness does; it comes down by a few counts, about three or four.

Mrs NAPIER - What about the issue of blind spots and so on?

Mr TODD - They are all treated on a merit basis, which would depend on the traffic volume. It is independent of the classification. We don't look at everything strictly within the classification. Those are more about the standard cross-sections, the pavement roughness and the service level it is going to bring. In terms of alignment, that is looked at slightly differently rather than strictly within those road classes, so it is not quite a one-for-one match. It is a bit hard to align them like that. But clearly, if you have a national highway, you would treat it differently from other roads where you do have it

performing a different function altogether. It is hard to put something like that in a compartmentalised way - with regard to alignment any way.

Mrs NAPIER - If I could come back to this issue of pavement depth, we have been talking about the projection of heavy traffic using the area. Why do we assume that CSR would accept that issue of pavement depth when they may not be being told what the true usage of that road is likely to be?

Mr TODD - If I may answer that one, having been involved in pavement design for a number of years. It is part of that contract and they will need to take that on board because they are up for the damage if it doesn't last. If you double the number of heavy vehicles, you don't double the pavement thickness. You increase it by a marginal amount. What I am getting at is that a slight change in the traffic volumes is not going to mean a huge marginal change in the pavement thicknesses. You don't have to get it down to the last truck and the last vehicle because of the way pavements perform.

Mrs NAPIER - Can I ask then about the stability of the under-the-pavement road formation? I accept the evidence that it was road that was built 70 years ago but when you look at some of the undulations in some of the areas, the cracking and the patchwork that has gone on over a number of years, to what extent are we dealing with a road reconstruction with renewed pavement base as against just renewing the surface?

Mr TODD - We are looking at some rehabilitation of the pavement base. I am not sure exactly of the technique - whether we are using new materials as well as mechanical stabilisation. What that will mean will be adding new material, mechanically stabilising it - which means with equipment - with a pavement layer which meets the contemporary standards in terms of gradient strength and those sorts of things. So it will be mechanically renewed and incorporate the existing pavement. We find a lot of those old pavements which have been used over many years are well consolidated anyway.

Mrs NAPIER - Often better than -

Mr TODD - Well, they are, unfortunately. The idea is then just to take the top half, add some new material, rework that and put that down as a new pavement layer basically.

Mrs NAPIER - Can I as in relation to the tree that was referred to by Mr Bennett and that section of road and the relative merits of relocating the road across Mr Roberts' properties and the other properties as against the costs associated with the relocation of the poles, the driveways and taking into account the 17 accidents that have occurred there over a period of time. I think you were indicating that relocation of both Telstra and the hydro poles was a reasonably expensive part of the project - \$150 000, I think you were talking about; it might have been \$100 000 and I am happy to be corrected on that. It seemed to me that if that has been identified as an absolute hot spot for accidents then I would be interested as to what the cost comparisons were for doing what you are proposing and what I can imagine will be some black-spot funding that will be pressured for a little later on down the track as against just doing that relocation of the track.

Ms HAY - Just a comparison between the two sections?

Mrs NAPIER - Yes. What is the cost of the section for upgrading, as we are proposing, as compared to running it through that track of land?

Mr HUGHSON - I couldn't tell you off the top of my head the cost of just upgrading that section. I know the rough costs for the whole lot but for what is some 700 or 800 m that we are talking about -

Mrs NAPIER - It would require about 700 or 800 m new road construction if that land -

Mr HUGHSON - To go over the back, the rough estimates that we have undertaken at this point in time is about \$700 000 to realign. That takes it to what I know to be Pitt's Hill - I am getting a nod from the gentleman over here - which is the top of the S-bend there. My estimate is \$700 000 to do new works there.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Is that including land acquisition as well?

Ms HAY - That's free; that was given, wasn't it?

Mr HUGHSON - I don't know if it's free or not. That would pretty much include land acquisition as well. The only thing I am not 100 per cent sure of is - and we haven't had time to do any sort of assessment - is there is an optic fibre cable up through there. I don't know whether we go anywhere near it or not. By doing the road widening we don't go near any optic fibre cables; we don't have to relocate any Telstra services. By staying on the existing alignment there are only three or four poles along that particular section that need to be moved, so that is \$10 000 for those three or four poles.

Mrs NAPIER - Could you give us a calculation of doing up that road if you didn't go ahead with the realignment?

Mr TODD - You would save on the accesses but you would need to build another junction to that road to give people access to their driveways.

Mr HUGHSON - Give or take a quarter of a million to do the widening of that 700 or 800 m as opposed to \$700 000 to go over there.

Ms HAY - Can I ask a question on that, too. Is there a rebate from those who are doing the maintenance? Is there some sort of rebate thing that they don't have to then maintain the existing road?

Mr HUGHSON - They would have to maintain the new road.

Ms HAY - But that wouldn't be for another I don't know how many years -

Mr TODD - We would be negotiating on that, as we do on other projects, to get some recoup on it.

Mr HUGHSON - Of course if it does actually at the same time change from classification to road category 5 to 4, the maintenance contractor is then due additional moneys because 4 is a higher standard of maintenance than class 5.

Mrs NAPIER - Which might be needed with the trucks anyhow.

Mr TODD - Well, it may be.

Laughter.

Ms HAY - And that renegotiation has been done before somewhere else in the State?

Mr HUGHSON - Yes.

Mr BEST - One thing I picked up on when there was some discussion about a shift in the road where there would be hydro poles and maybe optic fibre cables and then trees, I understood the comment was made that if you had more money you might opt to take the trees. Did I understand that right or -

Mr HUGHSON - No, it was -

Mr BEST - I thought it would have been cheaper to shift trees.

Mr HUGHSON - It's cheaper to shift trees, yes. It's a case of whether the costs are substantially excessive or not so who defines what 'substantially excessive' is. I think that's a decision made by myself in the first instance with a recommendation to the department which the department either accept or reject. So we'd take to them that section we were looking at on the highway where the ovata swift parrot trees were -

Mrs NAPIER - Swamp gums, aren't they, but what do you call them?

Mr HUGHSON - Ovata - eucalyptus ovata. With that section along there, we'll have to come up with - well if we do have to move the poles there's 10 poles and there's \$30 000 or \$40 000-odd or we take the five trees on the other side.

Mrs NAPIER - I'll give you some seedlings and we'll overcome it.

Laughter.

Mr HUGHSON - If we miss the hydro then there's no argument, we don't have to worry about it: we've missed the trees and we've missed the hydro - so excellent, that's a good job.

Mr BEST - Just finishing off, Mr Chairman, if I may. The horseshoe section: is there any estimate about other options in relation to that or what that would cost?

Mr HUGHSON - We have done a very, very rough estimate on Horseshoe Bend. It depends on what option you took and there's many and varied options there. It is a huge drop down one side to the river so you obviously don't want to do anything over that way. But there's in excess of \$300 000 for that corner.

Mr BEST - At the moment?

Mr HUGHSON - That's our rough estimate limit for that corner.

Mrs NAPIER - What are we going to spend now?

Mr TODD - No, that's over and above.

Mr HUGHSON - If we were to straighten that corner we're looking at in excess of \$300 000. At the moment, you're looking at a length which wouldn't exceed more than about 100 m and so you'd be looking at less than - what was that quick number I did a minute ago -

Laughter.

Mr HUGHSON - You would be looking at only \$50 000-\$60 000 there for that same section if we just have to widen there to the proposed standard.

Mrs NAPIER - And can we add to that the Albury Road intersection? I think we have asked that before, but these are the black spots that are coming up regularly in the submissions. The Albury Road intersection, how close are we to a guesstimate on that?

Mr HUGHSON - We have already done one and that was with just a few rough lines drawn on a page and some quick estimates - \$700 000 for the Albury Road junction.

Mrs NAPIER - And what is currently built into the budget, anything?

Mr HUGHSON - Nothing - we'll just widen the road as we go past the junction.

Mr TODD - One of the other witnesses indicated that the minister met with them some 10 days or so ago and we did undertake to do some more work on that junction and the concept, with the understanding of course that there is no commitment to do anything there but at least to explore what the options are with regard to that junction. I have asked Stuart to pursue to that, to look at what the possibilities are because it is a complex location. You've got a curve on a hill with the crest coming down and you've got the two-way junction coming in there. As Mr Hughson has indicated, it is a fairly expensive exercise so we want to pursue that a bit further in terms of getting some more work done on what could possibly be done, notwithstanding that there are no funds for it at this stage.

Mrs NAPIER - And the highway connection? You've got figures for that for an improved connection with the Huon Highway?

Mr HUGHSON - One section of the department has undertaken a concept design at the junction with Huon Highway. It is very minimalist in that it simply takes out some of the islands that are there at the moment and puts in some new ones in new locations. We did a quick calculation - it was \$150 000.

Mrs NAPIER - It wouldn't seem to be too expensive a project to me.

Mr HUGHSON - That was a concept design done within the department. It has not been shown to the public at all, so I don't know whether that would get public approval or not.

Mrs NAPIER - Potentially people could ask for a realignment of the southern entrance into the town on the bridge as part of that improved intersection as against just widening and providing slightly better negotiation angles for getting on and off. Presumably that is what you meant by minimalist.

Mr HUGHSON - It is minimalist in that at the moment if you head off into Huonville, coming from Glen Huon, there is a slip lane coming from Dover to head onto Glen Huon and then there is the main junction which we passed through which, if you are heading off to Dover you use, and if you are heading off to Glen Huon from Huonville you use. The proposal that I saw simply got rid of the slip lanes and put everything through, effectively, a straight intersection. As I say, minimal is simply that they will have paved islands over the slip lanes that are there at the moment and reshape the islands that there as they exist at the moment. There wouldn't be a lot of money involved in that but, as I say, it hasn't seen the public light of day so whether it would get acceptance from the public is another thing.

Mrs NAPIER - The other issue that as raised by Mr Watson was in relation to the sawmill's Huon Road entrances and accesses. What is being proposed there for better access for the sawmill?

Mr HUGHSON - Nothing has been done, other than I have met with Mr Watson on site and he explained the situation there with the trucks going in and out. At the moment they park on the side of the road, which puts them halfway out into the existing lanes. Obviously we will have wider shoulders now with the proposed design so that situation will be better. I see no issue with doing as much widening of the shoulder outside his accesses such as within the existing road reservations so that we can achieve the best opportunity for him there. However, I have received no instruction from the department as yet that we specifically go out and design parking bays on the side of the road that the trucks then can sit on and wait. As I understand it, they quite often have trucks queued up, waiting outside the sawmill whilst others are being unloaded inside the sawmill.

Mr BEST - I don't know if you have had a chance to look at this, but you have heard from Mr Watson in relation to the golf club road and a hump there. Were there any costings in relation to that?

Mr HUGHSON - I don't think that one has been costed at all.

Mr DUGGAN - Mr Chairman, am I allowed to ask the two gentlemen a couple of questions?

DEPUTY CHAIR - Sorry, we can't allow that.

Mrs NAPIER - Mr Chairman, we could ask for supplementary evidence to us.

Mr DUGGAN - Deputy Chairman, there seems to be a discrepancy in what the gentleman is saying and what we've been given as far as a category 4 road is concerned. A category 4 road design to our knowledge is a road of 3 m of pavement plus 0.5 m sealed and then 500 mm of verge. A category 4, which, to our knowledge, is what was going to be constructed, on North Huon Road was a 3-m pavement plus 0.5 m of sealed shoulder which makes up a full pavement of 3.5 m which, multiplied by two, is 7 m. Now either it is wrong or it is right. This came from documents provided by DIER as to what was

going to be constructed on the North Huon Road. I don't believe there's any suggestion whatsoever that that category 4 road is 2.7 m of pavement and I find it rather startling that we're talking about 2.7 m wide and some grand thing that is 3 m wide. A category 4 road, to our knowledge, Deputy Chairman, is 3 m of pavement plus 0.5 m of sealed pavement; in other words, there's a white line so you've got 0.5 m besides and it makes a total width of 7 m of paved road.

I would like to draw that to the attention of the committee because I do believe we're talking in two different sections - either that is the road width or it's not - one or the other.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Thanks, Mr Duggan.

Mr TODD - All I can refer to is the target standards we provided to the committee before. I'm not sure -

Ms HAY - This does say October 1999 and this is what Mr Harriss is going by. It says there are differences with the usage and how many vehicles are travelling on it and it has got from 2.75 m to 3.0 m for the actual pavement and then it's between 0.35 m sealed on the other side to the maximum of 1.0.

Mr TODD - Deputy Chair, to help the committee I'm prepared to clarify that information.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Yes, if you would, please, that would be very helpful. Any further questions or comments from the committee?

Ms HAY - It's obvious that everybody is very eager to have this road redeveloped or improved in some way. You said through consultation that's what you gauge from the community. Have you consulted with the community as to whether they're happy with the plan as it is now with the 6 m and if you've done any other consultation and when was that taken? So, yes, they are happy with the change - are they happy with your plans?

Mr TODD - That's a pretty tricky question.

Mr HUGHSON - Yes and no. The 3 m, as I understand it, came from - and this is only as portrayed to me by other people - a meeting between Mr Lennon, when he was the Minister for Infrastructure, and the Fix the Glen Huon Main Road committee. At that meeting, which was prior to the election, there was an agreement made that the standard that would be delivered was a 3-m sealed, 0.5 m unsealed shoulder, 0.5 m unsealed verge and that was accepted by the committee. The committee itself is very representative of the views of the community and some of their meetings have had 200 people at them.

Ms HAY - That was before the other decision about the North Huon Road.

Mr HUGHSON - That was before that decision - long before, yes. So that was the directive given to me as to the standard of road to be put in place. As to whether they're happy with what is now in front of you, I think they're happy that it is being widened. There are certain community groups - whether they're representing Forestry or other different groups and, indeed, the council - that want it wider than what it is at the moment. Probably, as evidence has been given, the community now recognises the impact of Southwood on the Glen Huon Road in terms of increased log traffic and the fact that they

can't be stopped provided they are not travelling using B-doubles. Putting words in their mouth, they probably do want more. But, as I say, that agreement was in place long ago and the committee at that time, the representatives of the community, were happy with the 3 m sealed and 0.5 m unsealed.

Mr TODD - But I understand that the plans were presented in November. Is that right?

DEPUTY CHAIR - Of 2002, yes.

Mr HUGHSON - Yes, 14 and 16 November the plans did go up in the community hall down there with advertising et cetera. We got a lot of people through at that time. As I say, most of the feedback was, 'We love the widening and are looking forward to it, but it is just not enough in terms of fixing junctions and vertical curvature issues'.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Thank you very much, gentlemen. On behalf of the absent chairman, I would like to thank all the witnesses today for presenting their evidence. It has been rather enlightening.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.