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THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART ON TUESDAY, 17 MAY 2016

HUON HIGHWAY/SUMMERLEAS ROAD INTERSECTION UPGRADE

DENISE McINTYRE, MANAGER NETWORK PLANNING, STATE ROADS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH; **ANDREW KNIGHT**, SECTION LEADER DESIGN AND DELIVERY, AND **KATHRYN EASTHER**, CIVIL ENGINEER, JACOBS, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mrs Rylah) - Thank you for appearing before the committee. A committee hearing is a proceeding of parliament. This means it receives the protection of parliamentary privilege. This is an important legal protection that allows individuals giving evidence to a parliamentary committee to speak with complete freedom and without fear of being sued or questioned in any court or place outside of parliament. It applies to ensure that parliament receives the very best information when conducting its inquiries. It is important to be aware that this protection is not accorded to you if statements that may be defamatory are repeated or referred to you outside the confines of this proceeding. This is a public hearing. Members of the public and journalists may be present, and this means your evidence may be reported.

Ms McINTYRE - We are here today to examine the public funding for the Huon Highway/Summerleas Road intersection upgrade. The project site has a very long history. This project is a safety upgrade. The project site has a long history of crashes at the intersection. There has been considerable work, on improving the junction arrangements, by the Department of State Growth or previous incarnations over some years. More recently, the speed limit was reduced. The junction arrangements were upgraded and the speed limit was reduced from 100 to 80 kph. However, that did not have an impact on the crash rate.

Ms OGILVIE - Really? That is interesting.

Ms McINTYRE - No. The crash rate has increased, if anything. Kathryn has done some work on crash statistics and some traffic modelling work.

In 2012 the department put a submission to the then federal government's Nation Building 2 program. After consultants analysed different types of junction arrangements, the submission to the Commonwealth government was for a grade-separated intersection. That was in 2012. From that submission, funding was promised, committed, by the then federal government, and then it was recommitted by subsequent federal government. A total of \$21.9 million has been committed by a combination of the Commonwealth and Tasmanian governments.

In the last couple of years our department has had another look at the intersection project to determine whether a lower cost solution could be accommodated. We re-looked at different types of grade junction arrangements such as roundabouts, or a combined semi-roundabout come improved junction. We brought Jacobs on board in September last year and their brief was to review the concepts for the intersection upgrade looking at some of the at-grade arrangements. Their brief was to provide us with a project which would improve the safety of the intersection. In that time Jacobs have undertaken a review of different types of options, different junction arrangements,

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undertaken traffic modelling to determine safety of different options, and also the longevity of different options being considered. They have concluded that the design you have before you is the most appropriate for this particular intersection.

Mr FARRELL - A couple of items of correspondence we have had to the committee have been in regard to the consultation with local government - or the lack of consultation, it would appear. I was wondering what consultation processes were undertaken during this project and how long ago consultation started and the level of consultation that has been done.

Ms McINTYRE - My role is project sponsor. I ensure that the objective of the project is met and that the project is able to be delivered from our partners' perspective. Andrew is the project manager and is responsible for developing and managing the project. Kathryn has been involved on the project too with traffic modelling, design, advice and everything else. Kathryn has also been involved in the stakeholder engagement so she might be able to give you a rundown from the time that Jacobs have been involved in the project, and the sort of consultation that has been undertaken.

Ms EASTHER - Really early on in the project we starting speaking with Kingborough Council, obviously a key stakeholder, and we have had a number of meetings to discuss the project with them. We gave a presentation on the concept design. On 11 February the presentation was given on the concept design, and you also had a meeting with a number of user groups.

Mr KNIGHT - Yes, there was the Kingborough Bicycle Advisory Group as well as the Road Safety Committee from Kingborough. The access committee was also invited to attend the meeting at Kingborough Council and unfortunately there was no representation from that group. We also met with Kingborough Council engineering staff as well as their senior management at the same time.

Ms EASTHER - We are now in the process of the DA with Kingborough Council and we met with Kingborough Council last week to discuss the DA and begin that process. We also did a presentation to the RACT to discuss the design. We have met with all the individual landowners who are impacted by the works. Anyone who is going to have an impact to their access or potential property acquisition we met with, that would have been in February as well, individual meetings with each of those.

We held a public display on Saturday 5 March at the Kingborough shopping centre from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. Andrew and I were there, as well as members of the department with the concept design. We spoke to the community about the concept design and answered any questions. We did have feedback forms so the community had the opportunity to fill in a feedback form. Following that day, the concept design was also displayed at Kingborough Council and Huon Valley Council for two weeks and, again, the feedback forms were placed there so people were able to fill in the feedback form and provide some comments on the design.

CHAIR - What feedback did you get?

Ms EASTHER - Overwhelmingly we found the feedback was positive, especially from the people who live around the area saying that they do not like to use the intersection, they don't feel safe, they go the other way. There was a lot of positive feedback about the safety improvements, and also the efficiency improvement of having the additional southbound overtaking lane.

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There was some mixed feedback. A number of people were concerned about potential increases in noise or potential loss of views if there were going to be any noise walls or mitigation in that area. We explained that we were looking at noise and if there were going to be any noise problems we would be coming back to speak to residents.

Mr SHELTON - On the consultation, I read where under the Kingborough Council it was discretionary and therefore the process through the council is that they advertise it and then discuss it. Then their feedback is fed back to you guys. How does that work? The intermix between them as a planning authority and you as the department, how does that interchange happen?

Ms McINTYRE - We are required to submit a planning application to the Kingborough Council to be able to construct our project. Kingborough Council have control of that process. They have received the development application submission now from the department. They will now need to consider it in context with the information that has been provided to them and they may decide to put additional conditions to what we have proposed in our development application.

Mr SHELTON - Thank you very much for the site visit. Most of the questions I had raised out of the site visit. It is fairly obvious once you get there that there needs to be work done on that intersection. I am a northerner and I don't go south of Hobart that often. To have a road that crosses major interchange coming out of the Huon Valley -

Ms McINTYRE - Yes, it's crazy.

Mr SHELTON - You related that there had been no fatalities on that intersection and I consider that more good luck than good management at this point in time. Although the speed limit has been reduced, when you have that volume of traffic going through, I can understand why it is a safety project.

The question is, and I did ask this out there, when it comes to the design, particularly of the dumbbell roundabout, the kidney shape, that was the best design for the traffic. You mentioned the grades: getting the two levels of the vehicle movements separated. You also mentioned roundabouts were one issue; you might explain why the roundabout was not considered the best option.

Mr KNIGHT - Earlier on in the design process we went through the options analysis and obviously an at-grade solution was one of the first ones that we looked at. The reason we didn't progress with that any further was the roundabout would need a diameter of about 60, 64, 66 metres roughly, give or take roughly. You need quite an extensive area of flat land to accommodate that roundabout. If you had to have had that area of flat land, then the downgrade coming out of Huonville, travelling towards Hobart, would have been a lot steeper than what you have currently to match into that roundabout.

You also need an area of flat land approaching the roundabout, not just for the roundabout itself, but you need an area of flat land approaching the roundabout to get sight visibility into the roundabout to see who is in the roundabout and what is coming. That downgrade coming into the roundabout would have created issues with engine braking noise. You would have had capacity issues where we predicted that the traffic coming out of Kingston would have been the dominant traffic flow and potentially not letting the Huonville-bound traffic get into the roundabout, which meant that you would have people backing up the ramp. If you have people backing up the ramp, and big trucks and trailers coming down, there is the potential for nose-to-tails, and potentially

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serious nose-to-tails. If you've got a big 40-tonne log truck or another truck coming down that hill and it smashes into one car, there will be a cascade effect as well.

There would be potential sight visibility issues with cars coming out of Kingston because they would have come up, the roundabout would be over here, and you would be looking over the top of the roundabout, bearing in mind that it is nice to come in on a flat gradient. Coming up from Kingston would have had sight visibilities for vehicles trying to enter from Kingston, and likewise vehicles travelling southwards would have to stop at the roundabout on an angle and try to accelerate up through the roundabout, which would potentially cause collisions as well, especially with trucks trying to pull away on a hill. Once again, there would be more noise and higher emissions as well, especially for the surrounding properties on the Kingston side of the roundabout.

For a number of reasons, pavement maintenance would have been an issue with everyone braking and coming down the hill into the roundabout. From a cost perspective as well, there would have been ongoing maintenance on that area.

Mr FARRELL - So a roundabout probably would have created more issues than would be solved?

Mr KNIGHT - That was our opinion, yes, definitely.

Ms McINTYRE - Previously when there was some consultation undertaken on a roundabout option in 2012, the heavy vehicle industry was in opposition to a roundabout at that location.

Mr FARRELL - For rollover issues?

Mr KNIGHT - Yes.

Ms OGILVIE - Thank you very much for the site visit this morning. As a southerner, Mr Shelton, I can say I am very familiar with this intersection. I just wanted to get that on the record because of the conversation this morning. It is, to my mind, one of the more dangerous intersections in the state, certainly in the south. It is a piece of road that is used a lot by families travelling to and from the sporting precinct. I think we spoke earlier about the fact that even I try to take a different route because of the danger of trying to get into the traffic when you are coming out of the Kingston area.

I am also aware that in the winter months it can be very dark and gloomy, so there is a visibility issue and maybe some ice. I think it is a good thing to be doing this upgrade. The fact that there has not been a fatal accident there is, frankly, a miracle. I am really amazed at that statistic, because it is truly a difficult piece of road.

When we were there on site, I was looking at the lighting down the road as well, which again in the winter months is tricky. What has been your approach around lighting of the road? Is that something that is being tackled?

Mr KNIGHT - Yes, in the current preliminary design stage we are at we have lighting on the ramps, not the full length of the ramps, but on the merge and the diverge points, which is obviously where you are going to get the most potential conflict, as well as on the roundabout. We have put lights at those key conflict points. It will also provide lighting for the pedestrians as well. At the same time, we are cognisant of light spill for the surrounding properties. Now with the latest LED

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lights, you can get quite a direct beam down, so we have modelled the lighting to ensure lighting spill does not affect surrounding properties.

Ms OGILVIE - That comes to some of my experiences on that road, particularly in the winter months when it gets darker earlier and some people forget to turn their headlights on, which makes them just moving missiles when you cannot see them. That is part of the issue, I think.

Mr KNIGHT - Yes.

Mr SHELTON - Regarding some specifics around the clearance of the bridge, you mentioned at the site meeting that the council had that road coming out of Kingston as a designated heavy vehicle route. The clearance, as the drawing shows, is 5.2 metres, which is on the minimum end of the allowable - under the designs. I am just thinking of the transport industry wanting to move something of a large nature through that intersection. You've got two options coming out of Kingston; you can go back up to the main highway and back around that way. As to the clearance on the overpass or underpass that you go through there versus this one, the question is, it is minimal, and if you had built something large in Kingston, is there any way to get it out and southbound if it is over 5.2 metres?

Mr KNIGHT - If you build it in Kingston and southbound, yes, because you would come out of Kingston and take the left off-ramp and carry on straight up onto the highway. You wouldn't go anywhere near the bridge.

Mr SHELTON - Fair enough.

Ms McINTYRE - Actually, you'd just use the ramp - do a left turn along the ramp.

Mr SHELTON - And if you were going northbound, you would go out the other road anyway.

Mr KNIGHT - Yes, you could go out the bottom end of the Southern Outlet where KFC is.

Mr SHELTON - If you were coming northbound you could take the off-bound ramp but then you have a wire rope in the middle that you have to get over. When people are shifting buildings and structures around the place - and I've been involved in a couple of moves - the clearance that is available is a problem. You mentioned that that was of the minimum clearance so I was wondering about the issues around that.

While I am on wire ropes and the strategy around that, have there been any accidents between vehicles travelling in opposite directions, apart from the intersection? The wire rope is going to go from somewhere substantially north to somewhere substantially south to separate the traffic heading in the different directions. I am wondering if there have been any issues around that.

Ms McINTYRE - I am not aware of any head-ons; I assume you're referring to head-ons or out-of-controls in this section. No, the wire rope is the absolute best practice that we would apply and is consistent with what we have constructed on the Kingston bypass. It was the minister's view, basically, that this was a new project and his preference is for a safe system approach to be applied to new projects such as this. At this point in time we are lucky enough with the budget as has been calculated to be able to include the flexible safety barrier. We will see how we go but at this point in time that is the absolute best practice and it is applying a safe system approach. It is more about managing a risk rather than dealing necessarily with an actual crash history.

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Mr FARRELL - From the correspondence the committee received, there has been a question raised as to why a second lane was not included on the northbound journey. You are obviously aware of that proposal, so why was that not done? Was it considered and what sort of cost would you be looking at to do that extension to the overpass?

Ms McINTYRE - If we go back to the objective of the project, this is a safety upgrade for an intersection and we had a particular amount of money committed to this project. We have included a southbound climbing or overtaking lane to deal with an existing problem we have with slow, heavy vehicles driving along in the gravel reserve and then pulling back into the running lane. The southbound lane has been included in this project to improve the safety of that aspect.

From back in 2011-12 when this sort of project was being considered, it was acknowledged that there was already an issue there. In terms of providing a northbound lane, we have asked Jacobs to undertake traffic modelling to determine when that need might kick in. At this point we are looking at 20 years on a very optimistic traffic growth. To do that now when we actually do not have the budget for it within this particular budget means we are at our absolute maximum in terms of what we can deliver with the funding available. We would have to find funding from another project, in effect. When we are looking at our investment plan over 10 to 20 years, there are other projects that we would invest funding into before we would invest money into or see the need to invest into a northbound additional lane.

Mr FARRELL - Currently the cost of the project is \$21 million?

Ms McINTYRE - The P90 is \$21 million, yes.

Mr FARRELL - What would be the projected cost in addition?

Mr KNIGHT - We have done some costings on a potential fourth lane. If you look at a lane from the interchange northwards, we would be looking in the region of half a million dollars. That is for the pavement only. That does not include the earthworks, the traffic furniture or any of the other add-ons. That is just effectively the aggregates and the asphalt. What we are doing now as part of this project is accommodating for a fourth lane in our design. If somebody at some point in time decides that another lane is necessary, the footprint is there. We do not want people to have to redesign and start moving roads around. We are allowing for the fact that that fourth lane could just be added straight on.

The reason we are not doing all of the earthworks is that we are going to have an excess of cut to waste, or an excess of dirt, for want of a better word, as we excavate Summerleas Road down. Where a fourth lane would go we are doing all the earth works, the filling for that. I do not know if you noticed when you left the site, there is still some sort of rocky high and knobbly ground on the left-hand side. That will obviously just stay as it is. We have that surplus of dirt and we do not want to create more surplus dirt. We will do all the filling. At some point in time, and we have predicted about 20 years plus, then somebody could just knock those little knobs down and extend the pavement further on.

One of the flow-on effects, I guess, of adding in a fourth lane now would be that the current off-ramp onto the Southern Outlet is one lane only. Having two lanes coming through the current project to a one-lane off-ramp is very likely to create even further safety issues. We do not want to fix one problem on the intersection and then create another problem another 1.5 kilometres down

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the road as people from two lanes try to merge onto one off-ramp. If we wanted to fix the off-ramp, we would have to go to two lanes, which means we would have to extend the Groningen Road bridge as well. We have not costed all that out because that is outside of our scope, but I guess that just highlights the flow-on effects at this point in time of trying to add a fourth lane in now, given the fact that from a return-on-investment type scenario, it is not needed or not warranted.

Mr SHELTON - After reading the submissions I ask: considering that two lanes had been added for heading south, why was there not an extra one headed north? When I drove the road, and not being aware of the gradients, but when turning onto the Huon Highway then it is a gradual uphill drag all the way through Summerleas intersection and then up the hill. You could understand why one lane going south is not adequate. But then in the reverse case, coming down, it is two lanes coming off the hill and there are two to three kilometres worth of dual lanes before you get to this intersection and it is all downhill. The traffic could be travelling at reasonable speed, heavy trucks and that sort of thing would not be slowed up. There is always the argument to do it now, it is always cheaper the first time around, but I can see why it wasn't added.

Ms EASTHER - You are right, it has come off a two-lane section previously. We are not expecting to get big groups of cars that have platooned previously. People have had overtaking opportunities before that two- or three-kilometre section.

Mr SHELTON - Yes, there is nobody who has been frustrated for the last three or four kilometres.

Ms EASTHER - Exactly. They have not been sitting behind a big truck for a long time.

Mr KNIGHT - They should have sorted themselves out by the time they get to that one lane. The reason for the southbound overtaking lane as well is that currently heavy vehicles do use that gravel shoulder. They pull over onto the gravel shoulder to let other vehicles pass, which is a safety issue in itself. You end up with little bits of rock and stone strewn out onto the road as well. Some trucks are doing that, others are not. As they come out of that first roundabout, it is a very slow haul to get up that hill, all the way up through the intersection.

CHAIR - You said the DA has gone in, but I note in the major risks for this project that a problem with DA is considered a major risk. Can you outline to us any feedback that you have had or what the implications are? What do you know, what don't you know, and how could that impact on the design that we have in front of us today?

Ms McINTYRE - Basically, a development application for a road project is always a risk because we have no control over the conditions that a council may apply. Council may decide that they put onerous conditions on a particular project or they may decide that we have not done enough environmental assessment or noise assessment. A development application for a major project such as this is always considered to be a high risk to a project.

CHAIR - Could you give the committee some examples of what changes they may ask for, particularly in regard to the design?

Mr KNIGHT - They may ask us to do further investigations on, for instance, street lighting. They may ask us to do further investigations on noise, environmental as well in terms of trees being affected - a range of things.

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We have tried to mitigate that as much as possible by engaging with the council very early on and we have had a number of meetings with the council and various levels of the council - their planners, their engineers. Even our engineer has been talking to their stormwater engineer almost on a weekly basis to ensure that we address the stormwater issues as much as we can, or to the point that they are satisfied. Potentially, their stormwater infrastructure could be at capacity and we don't want to go adding any more water to that for instance. We don't want to have to upgrade their stormwater infrastructure. We have been working with them to find out where the best place is for us to shoot any excess water and where they have flooding issues around their network as well. We have been engaging with all levels of Kingborough Council to try to mitigate those risks.

CHAIR - Is it possible that they could, through the DA process, require a significant change to this dumbbell three-lane feeder lane design that we are looking at?

Ms McINTYRE - It is doubtful but because they have to deal with the application they have in front of them, they could put onerous conditions that add significant costs to the project. For example, there might be some significant stormwater issues, hydraulic issues. There are a couple of trees that are significant in the council's planning scheme, so we don't know.

As Andrew has said, his team has worked with council officers to ensure they address issues that are expected to come up. We have submitted a very comprehensive and detailed development application and believe we have addressed everything that the council may possibly want addressed.

Mr SHELTON - Talking about the trees for a moment, it is indicated that there are some white gums and oblata and so forth. It appears to me that all the trees in the road reserve have established themselves there since the road was put in, which should highlight the fact that if there are safety improvements to be done and there is a tree in the road that there should be -

Ms OGILVIE - You're not allowed to cut trees down.

Mr SHELTON - We try not to cut too many down and of course it is an issue for the neighbours with the trees that are there, but the reality is that along with some wattles - that are weeds in my view - if you need to remove a tree or two, there shouldn't be too many issues with that, I would have thought.

Mr KNIGHT - Correct. The two trees that were originally identified are on the passing lane section as you approach the intersection.

CHAIR - From which angle?

Mr KNIGHT - From the Hobart end, travelling southward, about halfway up on that curve, there were two trees. One has since been removed by a maintenance contractor, outside of this project's scope and influence. The other tree is in very close proximity to the road and that is on the Kingborough Council's significant tree register.

Mr SHELTON - It would be an issue for vehicles travelling on the new road. If the tree was left there it would be too close to the pavement and if there was an accident it could create more serious problems so I do not have an issue with that.

Mr KNIGHT - It is pretty much close to the road.

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Mr FARRELL - There was a concern raised about the location of the bus stop. Has that issue been worked through?

Ms EASTHER - You will see in the design that we have proposed to relocate the bus stops away from the intersection. We initially looked at trying to keep the status quo and keep them in the vicinity of the intersection but that would have meant having them on the on-ramps to the highway. This is not a safe location to have the bus stops. There is quite a steep upgrade for the one that is going towards Huonville, so to have buses having to pull out when cars are accelerating up that ramp to try and merge with the highway traffic is not safe and is not a good location to have children walking around the intersection there, so we decided to relocate the bus stops further towards Hobart where there is an existing pedestrian underpass. That allows the students to access the bus stops through the pedestrian underpass with the wire barrier and means you are not going to get kids crossing the highway like they are doing at the moment.

We have done that in consultation with the two bus operators that use the stops and we understand that they are largely used as interchange points, where one bus pulls up and the kids get off and get onto another bus, so they were quite happy with this solution. They are pretty worried about the current situation because it is just not a safe spot. We understand that some children get dropped off or walk there so for some of them it will be a slightly longer walk, but it is a safer solution so that is why we have planned it on that particular spot.

Mr FARRELL - So currently they are crossing across the highway?

Ms EASTHER - Yes, currently they are crossing the highway.

CHAIR - I noticed as I was driving back towards Hobart that the pavement has deteriorated dramatically on the north side. How far down the highway are you replacing pavement in this project?

Mr KNIGHT - All the way down to the off-ramp, so all that broken pavement you saw will be remediated as part of this project.

CHAIR - Excellent.

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Ms SIMONE WATSON, GENERAL MANAGER, HUON VALLEY COUNCIL, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

Ms WATSON - Madam Chair, today I appear before you on behalf of the Huon Valley Council, not in an individual capacity, of course. The council is extremely concerned after receiving a number of contacts from Huon Valley residents with respect to two matters about this project. The first is the lack of consultation, as stated in my correspondence, and the second is the advisability of conducting a project worth some \$21 million when \$500 000 additional funding may result in a better outcome on those matters.

The council is mindful that this is a desperately needed upgrade. There is no question with respect to the design or the need for safety upgrades at this intersection. What they are concerned about is that there are 16 000 people who live south of this intersection, including a number of key industries in Tasmania, such as the aquaculture industry, which has its home in the Huon Valley, as well as agricultural industries such as the cider industry and a considerably booming tourism industry.

The consultation with Huon Valley residents directly was brought about when council became aware, through a member of the public, that there was a public display being held in Kingborough. There was no notification before this time. The residents of the Huon Valley, by and large, including one of the leading founders of the aquaculture industry, were not aware until they saw the advertisement for the public display. I do not know what may have resulted from that consultation. Without it, I do not know that anyone will ever know what would have resulted from the consultation.

These businesses use this road on a daily basis for their economic development. As to the modelling that is talked about, we simply do not know whether or not that included the projected growth in the aquaculture industry, which has been significant year on year. Similarly, the agriculture industry and their expansion plans for the Huon Valley are perhaps another thing that is unknown at this stage. That said, they may have been consulted but it is simply an unknown factor.

The stakeholder engagement, which was organised to be held at council chambers, had very little advertising, and therefore there are concerns on behalf of my council that people were not sufficiently informed. The design that was placed on the website was difficult to access and lacked the detail that perhaps was necessary, to the point that many residents who contacted me said that they were not even aware the road from Huonville to Hobart was missing a second lane because the detail was such that -

Ms OGILVIE - Was it the quality?

Ms WATSON - The quality, but also the resolution. Of course, because it is such a large project, it is difficult to put it online. That is no criticism of any consultant or DSG involved in this matter; it is just a fact of what was presented online. The detailed engineering drawings were not there. It was only when, for example, some of our industries started discussing it at a networking function that several of the major agricultural players became aware that a second lane was not there on the southbound Huonville to Hobart road.

The second concern that has been raised is with respect to the bus stop. Currently there is an issue with children crossing across the highway. We understand this. However, in servicing the needs of Huon Valley residents, particularly given the growing traffic congestion in Hobart, the

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non-provision of parking, which is used at this stage in the informal gravel affair on the existing intersection, the removal of that and placing a bus stop off the side of what is a major highway, including the major high-productivity vehicle route, perhaps have left some of our residents questioning what they are to do to do their commuter interchange.

This is not a matter I profess to have experience in, other than that these are concerns that have been raised through us and that I bring before you today. If this is to be a safety upgrade, the major concern I have heard with respect to the lack of the second lane between Huonville and Hobart is the merging traffic coming off the off-ramp, off the kidney-shaped affair. What has been presented to me is the logic that having traffic merging into a single lane is likely to create congestion. Even though the driver frustration because of the dual lanes coming down the hill is perhaps removed, there is still going to be a merging issue there.

I am not sure that I can add much else other than the user groups that were consulted, such as the Kingborough Bicycle Group, Road Safety Group, access committee and the Kingborough Council, at length, which is of course appropriate. I find it quite surprising that our major industry groups were not consulted; they use this route and rely on it strongly as part of their lifeblood. The Kingborough and Huon Valley municipal areas are growing. They are in the top eight growth lists of regions within this state. There is concern that 20-year modelling perhaps has not taken into account a number of the industry growth factors and the population growth. As we saw with some surprise, the Huon Valley has grown, but the population growth figures don't include an accurate reflection, given we are so far away from the last census. It is of some concern as well that those growth figures may not be accurate at this stage.

Ms OGILVIE - In your opening statement you mentioned the \$500 000 top-up figure. Could you expand on that and what you think that needs to be spent on, and the difference you think that would make to the community in the Huon?

Ms WATSON - The representations have been made predominantly for the second lane in the Huonville to Hobart stretch. My understanding is that the concept costing of that is roughly \$500 000 for the pavement, which is where that \$500 000 figure comes from. That has been the strongest representation overall.

On matters such as transport interchanges, et cetera, the community is aware of longer-term issues, and that this central project is for safety upgrades, and it is appropriate.

Mr FARRELL - Getting back to the consultation, what was the consultation of the people of Huon? Was there a display at Huonville?

Ms WATSON - There was.

Mr FARRELL - Was that widely advertised?

Ms WATSON - No, the display at Huonville came from a discussion between myself and the consultant engineers. It was an offer by council to have the static display, which was very gratefully received, and to have feedback forms within council main offices.

I am not sure of the extent of advertising, although I know of none within the Huon Valley area directly.

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Mr FARRELL - So that was initiated by the council?

Ms WATSON - Yes.

Mr SHELTON - I did ask this question at the site meeting. We have mentioned \$500 000 for the second lane. It is my view that to extend the dual lane coming north down the hill for the continuation is substantially more than that, but I will put that question back to Andrew before we come. In order to continue the dual lane down the hill and right to the southern connector, you would need to widen the bridge to accommodate an extra lane, a fourth lane, coming over.

I make that point now because the figure of \$500 000 has been raised. I would understand that it is substantially more than that if you were to continue the dual lane down the hill right through to connect on to the southern connector - all bearing in mind the issue was raised about the single lane going on to the connector.

I do understand the issues around Huonville and the fact industry is growing and a substantial number of trucks come out of that part of the world. My electorate is Lyons and Parramatta Creek is the production area for Huon Aquaculture. As I understand it, they bring a number of semitrailers out of the Huon every night, six or seven. That is only one company, of course, so it is an issue. How much the cost is, I am not aware, but I can ask that question for you.

Ms WATSON - Thank you, Mr Shelton. I am uncertain as well. The indicative figure is one that was mentioned in the room today. I imagine it would depend on the design and whether or not it was felt appropriate to have one merging lane remaining onto the Huon Highway, which may alleviate the necessity to widen the bridge - I am uncertain. I am definitely not an engineer on this project.

The aquaculture industry is significant. Yes, there are, depending on the season, a number of trucks heading towards the Tassal plant at Parramatta Creek. There are also Huon Aquaculture trucks. We have had a doubling in the size of the hatchery at Tassal in Rookwood Road. Plus, Huon Aquaculture has just built a hatchery of a similar size. These are substantial developments and, because aquaculture has a three-year lead time from building a hatchery, substantial signs this industry will continue to grow at a rapid rate, as it has in the past.

CHAIR - In terms of the census figures, what are your figures from the council's perspective for the rate of growth in your community, of population and of industry?

Ms WATSON - We do rely on the census figures and we have the same issue with them being somewhat outdated until the next census. We are currently at approximately 3 per cent population growth. As to a rateable property growth, I do not know off the top of my head what our percentage increase has been. For population we rely on the census, for rateable property we rely on our own data but I do not have that. That is somewhat confused by the changes to the forestry industry on rateable properties because they became non-rateable with the change in legislation.

Mr FARRELL - The majority of vehicles on the highway at that point I imagine would come from the Huon. Would that be a correct assumption or are there other access points along the way that would end up on the highway? The highway is essentially the Huon Highway.

Ms WATSON - I have not done the studies but my estimate would be that the majority come from the Huon and some from Kingborough. There is a growing population around the Sandfly

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and Leslie Vale area, particularly where we are seeing residential growth pushing back. I am uncertain how this proposal will change the traffic dynamics and volumes coming from the Kingborough residential area, including around the sporting fields. If people have been avoiding the intersection, then is this going to enable them to use the intersection in a more confident manner and therefore increase the traffic volumes, which will increase the traffic volumes coming in and merging into one lane. That is a concern for some of the residents.

If we do see increased traffic volumes and the exponential growth in Kingborough, and with more people using the lane going to Hobart, you will have more people merging, increased traffic volumes and therefore that may also affect the modelling. Again, there is no professing to be a traffic modeller, just that these are the concerns raised.

Mr FARRELL - I have just noticed, in your role as general manager of the council, that in the stakeholder engagement report the Huon Valley Council is listed in the 'minimal specific action' column. Would you have preferred being in the 'secondary stakeholder' or maybe the 'primary stakeholder' column?

Ms WATSON - From a council point of view, the council as the representative body of the community perhaps could have provided - everyone has perfect vision in hindsight - a network linkage with our local industry, which is what we sought to achieve, to have the industry engaged in a round-table discussion with the project proponents. To the best of my knowledge that did not occur. As for council's role as a stakeholder in stakeholder identification, that really is a matter for the proponent, but it is more about the industry and the residents that needed to be consulted with, not council per se.

CHAIR - Thank you, Ms Watson, that was very helpful.

Ms WATSON WITHDREW.

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DENISE McINTYRE, MANAGER NETWORK PLANNING, STATE ROADS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH; **ANDREW KNIGHT**, SECTION LEADER DESIGN AND DELIVERY; AND **KATHRYN EASTHER**, CIVIL ENGINEER, JACOBS, WERE RECALLED AND WERE EXAMINED.

Mr SHELTON - I had a question about the northbound dual lanes coming down over the hill over the bridge and the discussion around the extension of those dual lanes to be incorporated right through to the Southern Outlet on-ramp and the bridge and the costs around that. Andrew mentioned \$500 000 but I don't believe that was dealing with a full extension of the dual lanes right through.

Mr KNIGHT - To clarify, the \$500 000 was for the aggregate layers and the asphalt from the intersection to the Southern Outlet off-ramp. It did not include a fourth lane from the intersection southwards and it certainly does not include any land acquisition and any of the other roadside furniture or a widening of the existing bridge or the proposed designed bridge. The \$500 000 was to extend the lane where the vehicles currently coming out of Kingston merge with the Huon Highway to link up with the off-ramp to the Southern Outlet.

CHAIR - Can you show the committee on the map, how far down and where?

Mr KNIGHT - It would be this on-ramp here - if we extended that from that point there down to the off-ramp there. That is the section we were talking about initially for the \$500 000. As I said, the earthworks are part of excavating that intersection. We would do all the filling along here that is required, but we would not do any of the cut where there are those cliffs and rocky areas along there because we currently have a surplus of dirt anyway.

The \$500 00 in simplistic terms was just the aggregate layers and that included the earthworks we would do as part of the excavation there, but not the additional and not the roadside furniture that would be required as well - certainly no acquisition. If noise walls were warranted because of the lane and the proximity to these houses, it did not include the noise walls, it did not include all of that. I would not at this point want to give a figure without having costed it properly as to what that would all take.

Mr FARRELL - Are you able to give a range, not holding you down to any figure, but just the vicinity?

Mr KNIGHT - I would say you would be in the \$4 million area, give or take. As I say, that then does not address the issue after that with the two lanes having to merge into one off-ramp. You are going to get people who are in the overtaking lane, or the right lane, suddenly realising they want to get onto the off-ramp and crossing that one lane of traffic to get onto the one lane off-ramp, whereas under this arrangement the vehicles are able to merge over here, they get into one orderly stream and they can then take the off-ramp. That merge opportunity over there allows them to get into that one orderly stream before they take the off-ramp.

Mr SHELTON - If I'm right, Andrew, that also does not include the section of Summerleas Road and the widening of where the dual lane finishes now, coming south down the hill and then connecting with the on-ramp and so on.

Mr KNIGHT - Correct, yes.

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Ms EASTHER - It does not include the bridge. That would be another significant expense.

Mr KNIGHT - Yes. Any fourth lane along here would see significant acquisition on these properties along here. Already you can see the proximity of that slope to the shed is pretty close. Of course another fourth lane here would push everything across and you would end up with a fair portion, especially the property owner over here, being quite adversely affected, and potentially even that one there as well.

CHAIR - Costing figure?

Mr KNIGHT - I don't know if I would like to say at this stage.

Ms McINTYRE - The other issue is that it puts the project into a different realm and it becomes a capacity project issue. That pushes it into another requirement regarding sound and regarding noise and whatnot, so it is not something that we could entertain. If we had a magic bucket that appeared with however many millions of dollars, it is not something we could achieve as part of this project. We would have to put in a whole new development application and basically redesign a considerable amount of the project from scratch, so it is not something we could deliver as part of this safety upgrade.

It is certainly something we have discussed internally as to when we might need four lanes through here. It was always part of the discussion when we were looking at a grade separation here. We have had it modelled and remodelled on very optimistic figures and the advice we have is that this is going to be quite fine for the next 20 years minimum. Through the consultation process there were letters that went out to the aquaculture industry and the Huon Valley Council. We also had communication with the Tasmanian Transport Association and at no point were we aware of significant issues until contact was made by a Huon Aquaculture operator-owner. We were not aware that there were considerable concerns about the lack of the northbound lane for this project. As I said, this project was, and is, a safety upgrade to deal with a specific issue.

Ms OGILVIE - I would like to ask about the consultation issue we have heard about. Perhaps you could flesh out a little from your perspective some of the concerns that were raised.

Mr KNIGHT - Yes, certainly. It is easier to draw your attention to the submission made, at section 2.7 on page 7 at the back. In there it says that on 16 February we sent out correspondence to the Huon Valley Council, the RACT, Cycling Tasmania, the Tasmanian Salmon Growers Association and the transport associations, which we believe could have been transporting fish or smolt or any one of the products of fish food. We received no feedback from the Huon Valley Council, the Tasmanian Salmon Growers Association and the transport associations on the project.

Ms EASTHER - We also advertised the public display with message boards at the intersection for a week prior to the public display. Anyone driving through the intersection would have been able to see those message boards and been aware that it was happening.

Mr KNIGHT - Those were the big, bright message boards.

Ms McINTYRE - There was a newspaper ad as well.

Ms EASTHER - Yes; it was in the *Mercury* twice prior to the public display.

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Mr SHELTON - I am not laying blame on anyone or anything, but my experience in local government is that until people have a better understanding of what is going on, and issues arise after that. Departments and councils, to put the council on the other foot, in their advertising of planning schemes and development applications and so on, do their very best to get to everybody, as you did, and sometimes that does not happen.

As a committee, even though it might be late notice, I believe we need to take the submissions on board and the issues raised and, being the fair-minded and level-headed people that we are, look at those things. Given the evidence and the crash statistics, I can see a definite need to get this development over the line and make sure it is safe for the commuters using that area. If the money is not there - and it is a substantial amount to put the four lanes through - if it meant that the project was either not progressed or delayed, then we are putting people at risk.

Ms OGILVIE - It is a balancing act.

Mr SHELTON - Yes.

Mr KNIGHT - A number of comments we received from the public display and afterwards were that it cannot happen soon enough.

Mr SHELTON - Overwhelming, as far as safety goes.

Mr KNIGHT - We indicated that construction was to commence in December this year and people were saying that is not soon enough.

Ms EASTHER - People were concerned about what was going to happen between now and December; that's how concerned they were.

Ms OGILVIE - With all projects, there is always that balance we see from our side and that we have to make judgment calls about, given the available budget and what can be achieved with the constraints that we have and what can be done. It is nice to have clarity that the \$500 000 is not a realistic figure for an entirely new lane, so it is good to have that on the record so that we understand what could be achieved with an additional amount. Again, that comes back to communication.

CHAIR - I would like to raise a question about the growth projections. Ms Watson raised two issues in regard to the projected growth by the agricultural industry and the three-year lag. Clearly those buildings are built and we are into that three years, so have you considered that growth? Are you aware of that growth? The second thing Ms Watson raised was have you taken into consideration that a lot of people are avoiding this intersection? Have you got any measure of how many people are avoiding this intersection, and therefore in fixing the intersection will we have a sudden influx of people who now want to use this intersection so we end up with, as in Sydney, where it works for about three weeks and then it doesn't work after that? Could you give us some explanation?

Ms EASTHER - The traffic modelling we did was done in conjunction with Keith Midson, our specialist traffic engineer. We certainly took into account induced demand, that a number of people at the moment do not use it but if you upgrade it it is going to be safer. We did some predictions of what we think is going to happen to the traffic movements when we upgrade it; straightaway as soon as we upgrade it, what is going to happen? We expect that in the morning

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more people are going to want to turn right coming out of Kingston and we looked at how many people in the evening, for example, turn left and do the opposite movement. There were a lot more turning left in the evening than were turning right in the afternoon. We did quite a lot of work on looking at what we think is going to happen with the induced demand. Keith worked on the growth rates and that took into account a number of developments that were happening. There are new subdivisions happening so, yes, there was a lot of work in looking at the growth rates.

CHAIR - Did you take into consideration the heavy vehicles movements that will be coming out of the aquaculture industry, out of the Huon Valley?

Ms EASTHER - I am not sure if that specific thing went into the growth rates that were done.

Mr SHELTON - A final question about the bus stop and the car parking. When we pulled up at 1 o'clock it was obvious that a number of vehicles use that as a car park, whether to drop kids off to the school bus or to park a vehicle. Was there any thought given about expanding an area around the bus stop for that possibility of more people?

Ms EASTHER - That is an informal car parking area at the moment. It is not used for buses, it is used for car pooling so people can pull up and car pool. The two buses using these stops are school buses, so people are not driving and parking their cars and then getting on the bus there. The majority are exchanging buses, and a number of them are walking or getting dropped off by their parents.

Obviously we do not want to create another safety issue; putting a car park on the side of the highway where the buses are and to have people pulling off and parking there is not a safe thing to do, so we have removed the car parks from the intersection. There is an alternative car park which we have spoken to Kingborough Council about. We understand it is heavily under-utilised at the moment, so that is an alternative point that people can use to carpool. It is not very much further away; it is a lot safer and they can pull in there and use that as a carpooling spot.

Mr KNIGHT - This has been developed since this photo was taken. You can see the Kingston High School still under construction, but that is now a big asphalted area and has lighting at night as well, so it is a lot safer for people to park their vehicles there.

CHAIR - Where this underpass is, if parents are coming to pick up children getting off the bus, how do they pick them up?

Ms EASTHER - The bus stops are along here, so we would expect that parents would need to come along to the residential streets here. It is quite a wide residential street so there is space there for them to pull up and pick up and drop off children. Then there is a pathway here, there is an underpass if they need to get to the other side and go that way, and there will be connecting infrastructure to the bus stops.

Mr FARRELL - Getting back to the traffic study, was there any indication of how much of the traffic comes directly from the Huon area and how much joins in along the way?

Ms EASTHER - We certainly had growth rates for the highway and for Kingston. The highest growth rate is in Kingston.

Mr FARRELL - So a lot of the heavy vehicle traffic would come from the Huon area?

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Ms EASTHER - Yes.

CHAIR - Thank you very much for your evidence today. As I advised you at the commencement of your evidence, what you have said to us here today is protected by parliamentary privilege. Once you leave the table, you need to be aware that privilege does not attach to comments you may make to anyone, including the media, even if you are just repeating what you said to us.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.