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PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

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PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

# **Richmond Road Projects - Section 1 Cambridge Link Road and Sections 3, 4 and 5 Richmond Road**

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*Brought up by Mrs Rylah and ordered by the House of Assembly to be printed.*

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## MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Legislative Council

*Mr Valentine (Chair)*  
*Mrs Rattray*

House of Assembly

*Ms Butler*  
*Mrs Rylah*  
*Mr Shelton*

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The Committee has the honour to report to the House of Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Works Committee Act 1914* on the -

### **Richmond Road Projects - Section 1 Cambridge Link Road and Sections 3, 4 and 5 Richmond Road**

## 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This reference recommended the Committee approve works to construct a link road between Richmond Road and the Acton Interchange, and other works to improve the safety of Richmond Road.
- 2.2 The Department of State Growth is undertaking an upgrade of Richmond Road under the Richmond Road Master Plan. The Master Plan identifies 8 Sections to be upgraded. The proposed works the subject of the Committee's inquiry relate to Sections 1, 3, 4 and 5 of the Master Plan. Section 1 of the Master Plan consists of the Cambridge Link Road and associated works. Sections 3, 4, and 5 of the Master plan involve a suite of safety improvements to Richmond Road between University of Tasmania Farm and Stony Creek Bridge.
- 2.3 Currently, traffic travelling to and from Richmond Road via Cambridge must negotiate an increasingly busy T-junction at the intersection of Cambridge Road and Richmond Road. Residential, commercial, industrial and tourism growth in the area has resulted in an increase in local traffic, commuter traffic, heavy and commercial vehicles and tourists. As a result traffic volumes at this intersection have grown, causing traffic congestion and a significant incidence of crashes. The Cambridge Link Road will provide a direct alternative route around Cambridge village, bypassing this busy intersection, thereby reducing traffic congestion and the incidence of crashes.
- 2.4 The proposed Section 1 works will include the following elements:
- Construction of the 2.06 km Cambridge Link Road, from the roundabout located at the Cambridge Road, Kennedy Drive, Acton Road and Tasman Highway on/off-ramp junction, to Richmond Road near its intersection with Jane Lane;
  - Construction of 2 bridges where the Cambridge Link Road crosses branches of the Barilla Rivulet;
  - Upgrading Richmond Road near the northern boundary of 292 Richmond Road to join the Section 2 works completed in 2018; and
  - Construction of a new T-intersection to join Richmond Road from Cambridge Road to the new alignment at the southern end of 292 Richmond Road.
- 2.5 The Section 3, 4 and 5 works continue the safety measures that have already been employed along sections of Richmond Road.

- 2.6 The proposed section 3, 4 and 5 works will include the following elements:
- Road widening works, with the provision of 3m lanes and 1.5m sealed shoulders;
  - Full depth table drains;
  - Junction improvements;
  - Minor alignment improvements;
  - Six pull-over bays; and
  - Changes to property accesses.

### 3 PROJECT COSTS

3.1 Pursuant to the Message from Her Excellency the Governor-in-Council, the estimated cost of the work is \$15 million.

The following table details the current p50 and p90 cost estimates for the project:

Total Project Cost	P50	P90
Base Estimate	\$15,484,000	\$15,484,000
Contingency	\$2,050,000	\$5,928,000
Project Estimate	\$17,534,000	\$21,412,000
Escalation	\$987,000	\$1,158,000
Outturn Cost	\$18,521,000	\$22,570,000

## 4 EVIDENCE

4.1 The Committee commenced its inquiry on Tuesday, 26 March last with an inspection of the site of the proposed works. The Committee then returned to Committee Room 1, Parliament House, whereupon the following witnesses appeared, made the Statutory Declaration and were examined by the Committee in public:-

- Kevin Bourne, Project Management Team Leader, Project Services, Department of State Growth;
- Luke Middleton, Project Manager, Network Planning, Department of State Growth; and
- Stefano Conforti, Project Manager, Project Services, Department of State Growth.

### Overview

4.2 Mr Conforti provided a brief overview of the proposed works:

*Mr CONFORTI - We are here to present the project we are about to tender, which includes the Cambridge new link road which will extend off the existing Richmond Road, which will be upgraded. This is part of the master plan for Richmond Road. As we know, Richmond Road, commonly also known as Colebrook Main Road, goes from Richmond to Cambridge.*

*The new link road is on a greenfield site and will go from the Kennedy Roundabout to Jane Lane. The length of that section is about 1.6 kilometres, while the upgrade of the existing section of the main road will be 3.3 kilometres.*

### Aboriginal Heritage

4.3 The Committee noted the discovery of Aboriginal artefacts within the road reservation, and understood that these sites would have been impacted by the original route planned for the Cambridge Link Road. The Committee sought further information on what measures had been taken to ensure the Aboriginal artefacts that had been discovered would not be impacted, and what engagement had been undertaken with the Aboriginal community. The witnesses indicated that the route had been changed to avoid these sites and as a result there would be no impact. The witnesses also indicated that the relevant Aboriginal heritage authorities had been informed of the discovery and the movement of the proposed route in order to avoid the artefacts:

*CHAIR - I might ask another question on that because we were talking about the heritage aspect being also Aboriginal heritage. Can you explain what that is and how you have negotiated your way through that issue, and maybe also explain if any advice has been sought from Aboriginal groups and/or their level of happiness with that?*

*Mr CONFORTI - As part of the project we investigated the site and our archaeologist found a site that could have been significant near the side of our corridor and inside the corridor. Our initial design had the alignment in the middle of the corridor and because of the archaeological significance of the site, we found we had to move towards the west to avoid that particular site. The archaeologist submitted his report to the Aboriginal community and they haven't given any feedback, so basically the legislation says to avoid the site, which we did, so really we are not impacting, but the archaeologist did inform the community, which has not given us any feedback of any sort.*

**CHAIR** - Do we know the nature of it? Was a midden or depressions found?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Not a midden; it is artefacts.

**CHAIR** - Artefacts?.....Are we talking about stone tools? Is that what we are talking about?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes. I have seen the photos in the report and, yes, they are stone tools.

**CHAIR** - .....As far as you aware, there has been no feedback?

**Mr CONFORTI** - No.

**CHAIR** - Was feedback requested?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes, it is part of the process that if they have feedback of any sort, they will give it to us or give it to their archaeologists, I suppose.

**CHAIR** - Has any reminder has been sent?

**Mr CONFORTI** - I have to check on that.

- 4.4 The Department subsequently provided the Committee the following information confirming that the appropriate measures had been taken with respect to Aboriginal heritage identified on the site:

*On receipt of the Austral preliminary finding a high accuracy survey of the finds was commissioned. This survey was undertaken one week after the original survey.*

*The purpose was to accurately define the location of artefacts and the boundary of the newly identified Aboriginal heritage site.....*

*The decision was made by the Department to amend the road design to avoid the site, and if possible the associated PAD (potential archaeological deposit)....*

*As the proposal did not now impact an Aboriginal heritage site, there is no legislative requirement to continue Aboriginal community consultation.*

*Please note that upon completion of the final draft of the Austral report, community consultation was undertaken as required ... .. The TAC declined to respond.<sup>1</sup>*

### **Measures to Mitigate the Increased Complexity of the Cambridge Roundabout**

- 4.5 The Committee expressed some concern that adding an additional leg (the Cambridge Link Road) to the Cambridge roundabout at the Acton Interchange may increase the complexity of negotiating this roundabout. The Committee sought further information on what signage would be provided to mitigate any safety issues arising from this increased complexity, noting that the area is very popular with tourists and visitors, who may not be familiar with the roads and driving conditions:

**CHAIR** - .....Given that this roundabout now, if you think about it, has six arms to it, the signage might be quite a significant issue in how you are directing traffic. Can you give me an

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<sup>1</sup> Email from Stefano Conforti, Department of State Growth, dated 28 March 2019.

understanding as to what sort of signage is going in at that site and how you think that might work?

**Mr CONFORTI** - A design was done for the signage of the whole area and it has been considerably reviewed and the scope of the signage has been extended. It goes well over the area of the project because it takes into consideration also that once the new link road is there, we want that people travelling on the old Richmond Road, the one that goes from Cambridge to the junction that we are constructing. There has been an enormous amount of work done around signs, as I said, not just immediately in the vicinity of the project but extensively in all directions from the airport and from Acton and all the rest. I anticipate that the cost of signage in the area will be very high just to make sure that everything works.

**CHAIR** - You will have 'No Entry' signs too, will you? Obviously coming into that site, a major ramp comes up to that point from the highway travelling east. You also have a two-way coming in from Cambridge itself and then another three points.

**Mr CONFORTI** - No, as I said there will be plenty of signs from all directions and the design has been reviewed; I cannot foresee any problems to find a way around that area.

**CHAIR** - The reason I ask the question is we have many tourists, a significant number of whom come from places where they drive on the right-hand side of the road and not the left and they may indeed go around a roundabout the wrong way, so the No Entry signs are absolutely imperative for people.

**Mr CONFORTI** - There will be adequate road signs and tourist signs in all the area.

**CHAIR** - You will take into account someone going the wrong way around a roundabout?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Absolutely, we did.

4.6 The Committee also recognised that increasing complexity may also raise safety implications when negotiating the roundabout at night. The Committee sought an assurance from the witnesses that sufficient lighting would be provided to mitigate any potential effects of this increasing complexity. The witnesses assured the Committee that additional lighting would be provided to ensure driver safety and all lighting would meet the relevant Australian Standard:

**Ms BUTLER** - ... I want to ask you a question about lighting at the actual roundabout. I am not a civil engineer or lighting engineer of any sort, but is consideration being given to make sure that lighting on that roundabout and on those intersections is appropriate?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes, there is already some existing lighting on the roundabout. We will put some more lighting at the approach of the fifth lane. That is basically the new leg that we will put in the roundabout from the new Cambridge link. There would be one light in the traffic island of that particular leg. The old roundabout will be revised.

**Ms BUTLER** - Is that tested? I know there have been problems in other roundabouts around the state where overhead singular lighting in a roundabout is sometimes not adequate, especially when there are foggy or very dark conditions. Even though it is an industrial area, it is quite rural and remote at the same time. Are those kinds of considerations being taken into account?

**Mr CONFORTI** - I personally don't know anything about any problem on the existing lighting of that roundabout. As we will add more lighting, if anything, it will do things better. I don't know of any specific problem at that or any other roundabout.

**Ms BUTLER** - No, I haven't heard of any on that particular roundabout, but there have been problems with other roundabouts. As conditions and car lighting change, there often are problems with it being bright enough for people to negotiate the roundabouts appropriately.

**Mr CONFORTI** - I suppose that if the problem eventuates during or after construction, we are still there to resolve it, like all problems.



**Mr BOURNE** - Can I just add to that? The lighting will also be designed - and is currently being designed - to the relevant Australian Standard. Part of the performance criteria there is to set a certain lighting level at the ground below, at conflict points like the junctions.

**CHAIR** - That is like for sight distance - vehicles approaching the roundabout, being able to perceive that it is there rather than thinking it is a continuation of the road and going over the middle of it. It is that sort of circumstance?

**Mr BOURNE** - That's right, yes.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Particularly with five exit points or entry points, that is a lot. You are reading signs... especially if you're not sure where you're going. There's a lot going on while you're driving.

**Mr BOURNE** - As Stefano said, there is a light in the centre of the roundabout and there is an existing light on each of those existing legs and we will add another one, so there will be a light per leg of the roundabout at each one of those junctions.

## **Bridges**

4.7 The Committee noted that the Cambridge Link Road would include two bridges to cross branches of the Barilla Rivulet. The Committee sought further information on why bridges, and not culverts, had been chosen for these crossings, noting that culverts were cheaper than bridges:

**Ms RATTRAY** - In respect of bridges, when we were onsite, I asked: why weren't we using large culverts? They are much more cost effective. You responded with an answer that you are futureproofing it. We don't do that for stock underpasses, but we do it for bridges, so I would like on the public record why we're having bridges and not large culverts.

**Mr CONFORTI** - Before the bridge is designed, we have a hydraulic study on the flow that is not the current flow, but predicted to be 100 to 2000, I think Kevin told us, for the speed of the water. From that study the size of the bridge is designed and obviously for this particular case the culverts were not adequate and not big enough for the flow of water that we wanted to pass under those bridges. It is in the interests of the department to keep the cost of the project as low as possible, so certainly if culverts were sufficient, we would have installed culverts.

## **Pull-over Bays**

4.8 The Committee noted that 6 pull-over bays would be provided as part of the safety upgrade works on Richmond Road. The Committee sought further information on the reasons why the Department was providing pull-over bays. The witnesses noted that these areas already existed as informal pull-over bays and are currently used by local, slow-moving agricultural vehicles to allow built up traffic to pass. The witnesses also indicated they did not expect or intend for there to be a broader use of these pull-over bays by other vehicles:

**Ms RATTRAY** - We talked earlier about the six slow vehicle pull-off areas that are not signed or defined -... ..The six lay by areas - and we had a discussion around adequate signage for those because sometimes people don't realise they have that opportunity coming up and tend to overtake unnecessarily before they perhaps should and then realise they have just gone past a slow vehicle lay by area. I am interested in the signage. I know you took that question on notice this morning, Stefano, so I wonder if you have an answer.

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes, I had the opportunity to talk with the designer because I remember we had the same discussion for section 2 which was recently completed. Basically, those lay by or pull-over areas are really totally informal in the sense that they don't apply any design

standard for roads and are just an opportunity for the local agricultural vehicles to temporarily pull over. Because they don't apply any traffic standard, we don't want to encourage anyone to actually use them apart from the locals. That is what I was told. The local tractor driver knows that on Richmond Road, there are probably cars behind them so they would pull over and let them go past, but -

**Ms RATTRAY** - Why would you waste good seal on them then, if you're not going to encourage people to use them?

**Mr CONFORTI** - As I say, we encourage the locals rather than any other vehicles. They're not really overtaking lanes or stopping lanes. In fact, if you look at section 2, you can hardly see that area. There is no line marking to show that there is a wider area; it is just for local traffic.

**CHAIR** - If they're in the know and the farmer is moving a hay baler or a harvester of some description, they are aware these areas exist; if they see a lot of people behind them, they'll pull over and let people pass?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes, that is exactly the intention.

**CHAIR** - That is the intent of them, rather than tourists pulling over and letting people past or whatever?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes.

- 4.9 The Committee sought to understand why consideration had not been given to turning the pull-over bays into formal overtaking lanes or slow vehicle lanes. The witnesses indicated that providing overtaking lanes instead of pull-over bays would significantly increase the scope of the project, and the focus of the works on Richmond Road was on safety improvements, not improving travel efficiency:

**Ms BUTLER** - If there were an opportunity to turn that into a proper slowdown lane - I know that many people who commute from Richmond to town get stuck behind traffic on that road. It is something locals often complain about. Being a local member for Richmond, I am sure the community would appreciate an opportunity for a lane where they might have a chance to get around other traffic. There may be older people or tourists who like travelling at a slower pace, so it would be great if that could be considered to decrease the commute time for people who choose to commute from Richmond to Hobart on a daily basis.

**Mr CONFORTI** - I think similarly to the conversation we had about the bridges, if we had to put in proper overtaking lanes, we would have to stretch and elongate them much more than what the pull-over bays are now. They would also be much wider, so there would be acquisitions and it would be another project altogether. The scope of the project would be completely different. As I understand it, it is a safety project rather than improving traffic viability.

- 4.10 The witnesses also highlighted that formal, signed slow vehicle pull-over bays or lanes may present other safety issues:

**CHAIR** - Wouldn't having a sign like 'Slow vehicle lay by', for instance, give a bit of a hint that this is where you go if you want to travel slowly? Are you saying that might create safety issues in itself?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes, exactly. For example, if a B-double had to pull off there, the length of the area wouldn't be sufficient for the truck to go in and out safely.

**CHAIR** - So you would encourage them to do something that is not feasible, in effect?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes, we encourage the agricultural slow traffic rather than -

**CHAIR** - Rather than general traffic.

**Mr CONFORTI** - A B-double would go 80 kilometres an hour and that pull-over area is not designed for the time and space it would need to pull off and come back in.

### **Roundabout Slip Lane**

4.11 The Committee understood that a slip lane at the Cambridge roundabout would be provided for traffic entering from Kennedy Lane, and sought further information on the reasons for this:

**CHAIR** - Can you cover the slip-road construction that is mentioned, what its purpose is in main part, why that is being put in and any issues you might see being encountered?

**Mr CONFORTI** - That is the slip-lane at the roundabout?

**CHAIR** - At the southern roundabout of this project.

**Mr CONFORTI** - That is to reduce the amount of cars heading to approach the roundabout. We will basically facilitate the flow of traffic from that direction.

**CHAIR** - It could be traffic coming out of the industrial parks or out of Cambridge Park itself, and it can virtually move straight through.... .

**Mr CONFORTI** - Exactly.

### **Provision for Cyclists**

4.12 The Committee recognises that Richmond Road's popularity as a cycling route is growing. The Committee questioned the witnesses on what safety improvements would be delivered for cyclists. The witnesses indicated that road widening works, including the provision of 1.5m sealed shoulders, would provide a significantly safer environment for cyclists:

**CHAIR** - ....I raised the size of cycling shoulder during the site inspection; it is 1.5 metres. Can you put on the record why that size was chosen I think under the law we always have to provide a 1.5-metre distance between cars and the cyclists. One-and-a-half metres will put them on the ropes. I would interested to hear the rationale about the 1.5-metre shoulder.

**Mr MIDDLETON** - ....AustRoads guidelines recommend 1.4 metres for cycling space on our road network. We have gone a little bit further and given 1.5 metres. The passing safely distance you referred to is new, but there has always been a requirement to overtake only when safe to do so and that still applies.

**CHAIR** - .....Is that 1.4 metres you were saying an Australian Standard? Do you know whether other states a 1.5-metre clearance when passing a cyclist? Is that standard in their law or is it only Tasmania?

**Mr MIDDLETON** - Not every jurisdiction in Australia has that law. I know Victoria does not although they are currently looking at making it an advisory criterion, but most of the mainland states, I believe, have adopted it as a requirement.

**Ms BUTLER** - .....On our drive today when we were heading towards Malcolms Hut Road, there was a small bridge and the area for cycling would have been minimised to nothing whilst going across it, so there is not actually a space there for a bike to stay safely there, which would mean there would have to be a stop in the traffic. Has that particular section been looked into and what that might cause? You have that here, and then you go up straight towards a hill, and a driver coming down the hill might not see bike riders. I don't know how cycle-friendly that road will end up being when you are having sections where there will be no room for cyclists. I think it is important we have that on the record. I am

keen to know if there have been any investigations or safety assessments done in relation to how cyclists and cars could navigate that space together.

**Mr MIDDLETON** - Again, speaking from my personal experience as someone who rides the road, those bridges you talk about are just one of the constraints that exist along that road. The fact that we're going to end up with an edge line and a 1.5 metre shoulder outside that edge line for the majority of the route now between Malcolms Hut and Cambridge is a big safety improvement. To replace those five bridges - because we wouldn't be able to widen them and a number of them are fairly old - is an expenditure the department is no doubt going to have to grapple with in future, but it is not something covered within the budget of this project. If we were to try to do that, we wouldn't be upgrading as far as the project envisages going. For those short distances, it is already like that now. Again, as a cyclist, we trust motorists a hell of a lot; we trust them to do the right thing and overtake safely, as they are required to do now. We will still be doing that with the widened shoulder.

- 4.13 The Committee sought to understand what had led to the inclusion of the cycleway under the Barilla Rivulet bridge. The witnesses noted that the Clarence City Council and Cycling South had negotiated with the Department for inclusion of a cycleway at the bridge, which would form part of the local recreational pathway for cyclists and walkers:

**CHAIR** - I have a question with regard to the cycleway under the bridge, can you provide us with an understanding as to how negotiations with councils happened with that, what their response was and what their intention is maybe, just for the record?

**Mr MIDDLETON** - The council approached us through Cycling South regarding the issue of making some provision at the bridge structures for an extension of the Barilla Rivulet pathway that they had highlighted as a plan within the Cambridge master plan.

**CHAIR** - So is that to get cyclists off the main highway when travelling say through to places like Port Arthur or whatever? Or is it to handle cyclists who might be flying in with their bike and having somewhere safer to go rather than being on the main highway?

**Mr MIDDLETON** - No, the council is looking at the pathway. It runs along Barilla Rivulet basically from the primary school or the oval, more as a recreational trail. Not just cyclists but walkers as well, just to give them a loop. I think the intention is to get it down to Backhouse Lane which is just to the east and they will be able to do a loop back by the Kennedy Drive and Cambridge Road interconnect.

**CHAIR** - So it is not part of the greater Tasmanian cycling route? It is a local cycling project?

**Mr MIDDLETON** - Very much. It is the council's view that it is a recreational trail.

### **Consultation and Public Awareness**

- 4.14 Noting that the road reserve for the Cambridge Link Road had been in place since 1995, the Committee was interested in gauging the level of community awareness of, and support or otherwise for, the project:

**Mr SHELTON** - As we discussed out on site, my question is about this road reserve and how long it had been in place. When the highway/freeway went to the airport and the overpass was put in at the specific place, it was mentioned this land or road reserve had been in place since 1995. ... My main issue is that the locals have known about this road reserve being in place for a number of years. Can you comment along those lines as far as objections or any issues that were raised?

**Mr CONFORTI** - No objections were raised on this particular matter.

**Ms RATTRAY** - And both lots of landowners have been supportive of the project to date?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes.

- 4.15 The Committee also sought further information from the witnesses on the public consultation the Department had undertaken for the project:

**CHAIR** - Could you expand on the level and extent of public consultation held over the last 20 to 25 years in relation to this so we can clearly understand the opportunities the community has had to have input?

**Mr CONFORTI** - In September 2017, there was a presentation to the local council. I did not attend that. I reckon that Luke perhaps did. Public consultations also took place in September 2017. They took place for a few hours in the public hall in Cambridge and then a few days later, in Richmond.

**CHAIR** - Was that in the evening or was it at a time when people had access?

**Mr CONFORTI** - The one in Cambridge was in the morning over the weekend, and the one in Richmond was in the evening and was a -

**CHAIR** - People had plenty of opportunity to get there if they needed to?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes, it was held on a workday evening.

- 4.16 The Committee was also interested to understand the Department's plans for communicating with local residents and commuters, including how the community would be made aware of the commencement and progress of construction and any disruptions that may be experienced:

**Ms RATTRAY** - In regard to letting the community know where the project is at: I called in to get some fuel when I arrived this morning and the gentleman at the servo very helpfully showed me where I needed to be. He had a nice map that Pitt & Sherry and Andrew Fowler had provided to him. He was certainly concerned about his business and any impacts on his business in the future. Does the department go back to the community and say, 'This is what we've settled on; these are the time lines, and there is around a two-year construction phase.'? Does that happen or is that going to happen with this?

**Mr CONFORTI** - We have consulted with the whole community at large; we then start concentrating on those who are immediately -

**Ms RATTRAY** - Are directly affected, yes.

**Mr CONFORTI** - affected. On our website we update the progress of the project continuously. We provide that website to the public. We continue to talk to the people around that area before and during construction, but as far as we understand, we don't intend to go back to the wider community.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Just something to let the community know that perhaps once the tender has been let and this is the construction time, or expected commencement date, just so they have some understanding. There might be a small local paper that does a delivery or something, a school newsletter -

**Mr CONFORTI** - We do very often use local newsletters.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I think it is really good to keep the community informed when it is going to be something that will affect people, but also, too, that there is going to be some disruption and a lot more activity over a long course of time.

**Mr CONFORTI** - In addition to that, we have the visible signs along the road as we saw today which normally give the date from when to when for the site.

**Mr BOURNE** - We're using social media more extensively now to communicate those works.

### **Impacts on Landowners**

4.17 The Committee recognised that a number of landowners would be directly affected by the proposed works. The Committee understood that impacts on landowners would include changed property accesses, acquisition of land, severing properties and arrangements to access severed land.

4.18 The Committee noted that a number of properties that currently had direct access to Richmond Road would no longer have direct access to Richmond Road or Cambridge Link Road. However, it was understood that alternative accesses would be provided as part of the project. The Committee was interested in the arrangements that would be in place during construction to facilitate access to affected properties for landowners and visitors:

**Ms BUTLER** - *The business - the Coal Valley Vineyards and the PID 517653 - is located at 257 Richmond Road and we were adjacent to that today in Jane Lane. That is a business whose door, as such, is on that particular piece of road.*

*..... Quite a lot of tourists drive along that road and they stop at certain vineyards as they go, so easy access is very much part of any of those businesses' business plans. Have any contingency plans been put in place for that business or any other affected business with access to their sites during construction? I suppose that one would be the main one. Have consultations happened with that particular business owner?*

**Mr CONFORTI** - *Normally during construction we make sure we always leave the access open to the landowners, the adjacent landowners. If there is anything specific and temporary closure has to be done, we definitely consult and have plenty of consultation with that landowner. I am not aware of any particular access that has to be closed for any length of time.*

4.19 The Committee also recognised that businesses losing direct access from Richmond Road may rely on attracting visitors, and may be adversely impacted by the loss of direct access. The Committee sought confirmation that appropriate signage would be provided to mitigate these risks for any affected landowners:

**Ms RATTRAY** - *And some signage for those properties, Stefano?*

**Mr CONFORTI** - *Yes. Normally, if they have tourist signs, for example, we replace them, and if they have a business or something, they can ask the department for signage at any stage, so it is not just during the project.*

4.20 The Committee was aware that the Cambridge Link Road would cross two properties, and was keen to explore what arrangements had been made for landowners to access their severed land, and how decisions on the type of access to severed land were made:

**Ms RATTRAY** - *In regard to the severing of two rural properties for this project - it is quite significant for any property to be split in two, and there are two properties - can you talk us through that process and put on the public record the support from those landowners in regard to that?*

**Mr CONFORTI** - *We have been in continued discussions with the stakeholders, the locals and the property owners around the project, and we are continuing to do so. We are providing some access in the new link road and we normally improve the existing access.*

**Mr SHELTON** - *..... Following from that, putting a road through the middle - and it is a new road, not an existing one - where you have to build an underpass et cetera, was it considered a stock underpass? One of them is not a significant amount of land so the amount of stock*

going from one side of the road to the other wouldn't be that great; however, the Cambridge and Richmond people at some time will probably be pulled up by the local farmers moving stock from one side to the other. That will happen because access has been given and it is the only real way of getting across the road, unless you truck stock from one side of the road to the other, which is not practical. Where is the point at which the department starts looking at whether it would be feasible or viable to do a stock underpass? I take it this was too small, which is why it's not there. Where is that point that you -

**Mr CONFORTI** - We normally look at the existing activity, how they actually move the stock. If the projects stop them doing that movement of stock, we look into providing a stock underpass or an access for them to continue to do business as usual. Normally, if we don't change the business we don't provide any extra underpass or any other access. This is in normal circumstances. I understand that one of the properties we are severing does not have stock and consideration was given to an underpass, but I think the trucks or agricultural plant they had were far too big to be able to go under, so an access from one side to the other was given so they could cross the new link road there.

... .. Now I am talking not about this project, but you really have to go into the nitty-gritty of how they run the business and what we are causing to the business.

- 4.21 The Committee also questioned the witnesses if, when negotiating access to severed land for landowners, potential future changes in land usage were considered and factored in to the type of access that is provided:

**Mr SHELTON** - ... .. I would make the point to the department that you looked at the activity on those properties we are dealing with at the moment. I suggest that somewhat of a futuristic point of view should be looked at. If the current owner decided to sell, what is the potential for those two pieces of land? Could it be intensified, and, therefore, one day would there be a need to have an underpass? If that box were ticked and even though it might not be relevant for the current owner, it could be a significant advantage down the track if somebody comes to you and says, 'We want to dig up this road and put in a stock underpass.' There is no cheaper way to do it, or no cheaper time to do it than when a new road is going in.

**Mr MIDDLETON** - ... .. Certainly, we had those discussions around an underpass for one of the owners and as Stefano said, after consideration the owner actually said, 'No, that's not going to work for me.' We can really only provide - again, as Stefano was saying - what a business needs. It would be nice to take account of what might happen, but we're not really in a position to do that and we'll just have to cross that bridge when we come to it and if there is a change in use that intensifies the use of the land involving stock of some description.

### **Environmental Impacts**

- 4.22 The Committee understood that the proposed works may have an impact on some threatened species of flora and fauna. The Committee questioned the witnesses on the species that may be impacted and the measures that would be taken to mitigate any impact:

**Ms RATTRAY** - ... .. I would like to explore a little around the investigations and surveys that have identified local environmental and heritage constraints. I think it is worth putting those on the record, particularly when questions arose this morning on the site visit. Could we have those identified? We are aware that there is a threatened species plant called juncus.

**Mr CONFORTI** - *Juncus amabilis*.

**Ms RATTRAY** - There is also reference to riparian vegetation and potential foraging habitat for threatened bird species. What has been put in place to deal with those? It would be useful to have that on the public record.

**Mr CONFORTI** - I understand *juncus amabilis* is considered a rare species although it is very common and apparently will soon be taken off the list of rare species.

**Ms RATTRAY** - So not quite as threatened as we were led to believe?

**Mr CONFORTI** - No. There are a number of small communities exactly from where we were looking, from the roundabout on that straight line, looking north to the Barilla Rivulet, and then a few more on the other side of the rivulet. We will apply for a permit to take and, as I said, I talked to our manager looking after this aspect, and it is not a concern for this project.

**CHAIR** - Do we know how extensive that permit to take will need to be? Any idea of numbers of plants that might need to go?

**Mr CONFORTI** - We will provide the map - the survey.

**CHAIR** - Are you tabling that?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes - they are the blue dots. It is not anticipated that the permit will not be granted because it is a common recurrence for this particular -

**CHAIR** - You apply for a permit from which body?

**Mr CONFORTI** - From DPIPWE.

**CHAIR** - The Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment. Is that right?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Do those permits need to be in place, not before the tender is issued, just before the works commence?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Yes.

**Ms RATTRAY** - ... ..As to the threatened bird species, any comment on what is identified in the submission?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Normally when we take some bigger plants, trees, we just check that there are no existing nests, and they understand that if there are existing holes, not nests, in the trees, they would be closed before construction.

**Ms RATTRAY** - So they couldn't build another nest?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Exactly.

**CHAIR** - Were there any nests of any significance found?

**Mr CONFORTI** - No, not at this stage, but normally we do the -

**CHAIR** - No wedge-tailed eagle nests?

**Mr CONFORTI** - We normally do these surveys just before construction.

**Ms RATTRAY** - So if there is a nest, will construction need to be halted until the eggs hatch?

**Mr CONFORTI** - Exactly, that is what we do. We normally close the hole before their season for the nesting.

### **Does the Project Meet Identified Needs and Provide Value for Money?**

4.23 In assessing any proposed public work, the Committee seeks assurance that each project is a good use of public funds and meets identified needs. The Chair sought and received an assurance from the witnesses that the proposed works were



addressing an identified need in a cost effective manner and were a good use of public funds:

**CHAIR** - *There are a few questions I need to ask you before you depart. The first one is: do the proposed works meet an identified need or needs or solve a recognised problem?*

**Mr BOURNE** - Yes.

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

**Mr BOURNE** - Yes.

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

**Mr BOURNE** - Yes.

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

**Mr BOURNE** - Yes.

## **5 DOCUMENTS TAKEN INTO EVIDENCE**

5.1 The following documents were taken into evidence and considered by the Committee:

- Richmond Road - Sections 1, 3, 4 and 5 Including Cambridge Link Road - Submission to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, State Roads, Department of State Growth, 7 March 2019;
- A document entitled, “Ecological Values Associated with Colebrook Road Survey Area”; and
- Email from Stefano Conforti, Department of State Growth, dated 28 March 2019.

## **6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

- 6.1 The Committee is satisfied that the need for the proposed works has been established. Once completed, the proposed works will improve travel safety on Richmond Road. This will be achieved by constructing the Cambridge Link Road, to reduce traffic congestion and the incidence of crashes in Cambridge, and the provision of other safety measures on sections of Richmond Road, which continue and tie-in with the safety improvements that have already been completed on Richmond Road.
- 6.2 Accordingly, the Committee recommends the Richmond Road Projects - Section 1 Cambridge Link Road and Sections 3, 4 and 5 Richmond Road, at an estimated cost of \$15 million, in accordance with the documentation submitted.

**Parliament House  
Hobart  
21 May 2019**

**Hon. Rob Valentine MLC  
Chair**

