



HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

PORT RIVER EXPRESSWAY—STAGE 1

Constitution Room, Old Parliament House, Adelaide

Wednesday 19 November 2003 at 1.35 p.m.

(OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT)

PARLIAMENT OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

MEMBERS:

Mr P. Caica MP (Presiding Member)
Ms V. Ciccarello MP
Mr T. Koutsantonis MP
Mr I.H. Venning MP

WITNESSES:

TIM O'LOUGHLIN, Chief Executive, Department of Transport and Urban Planning, Level 12, Roma Mitchell House, 136 North Terrace, Adelaide 5000; MARK ELFORD, Director, Investment Transport Planning Agency, Department of Transport and Urban Planning, Level 10, Roma Mitchell House, 136 North Terrace, Adelaide 5000; and JEFF GOODE, Senior Project Manager, Transport Services, Department of Transport and Urban Planning, Level 7, 33-37 Warwick Street, Walkerville 5081, called and examined:

232 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: Welcome, and thank you for appearing before the Public Works Committee today. Before proceedings begin, please note that this hearing is a lawful function of parliament and, as such, warrants the same respect which parliament itself demands. Sections 28 and 31 of the Parliamentary Committees Act outline the privileges, immunities and powers of the committee. In most instances, the hearing is open to the public. Evidence given will be recorded and made publicly available after witnesses have had an opportunity to check the transcript for accuracy. If you believe that there are any reasons of justifiable confidentiality, you may request the committee to hear part or all of your evidence in camera, or in private.

Before you commence your evidence, there are several matters that the committee requires you to respond to for the record. Firstly, please advise whether the proposition before the committee is exactly the same as the proposal submitted to and approved by cabinet. If it is not, then in what precise way does it differ? In particular, are there any errors or omissions in the submission that need to be drawn to the attention of committee members?

MR O'LOUGHLIN: It is the same as submitted to cabinet.

233 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: Secondly, the committee requires you to make a quarterly report about the progress of the proposal. Each report must provide a full explanation of any variations in project cost, target time frames or design features. Please confirm that you understand and will comply with this requirement.

MR O'LOUGHLIN: We understand.

234 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: Thirdly, the committee requires you to advise it at least eight weeks in advance of when the work will be opened, dedicated, commissioned or handed over. It also requires you to invite committee members to attend any function arranged to mark that event. Please confirm that you understand and are prepared to comply with this.

MR O'LOUGHLIN: We understand.

235 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: Do you have any questions of the committee before we commence?

MR O'LOUGHLIN: No. We are in your hands.

236 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: I understand that there is no verbal submission. We have the document before us that you so kindly provided. I have had a look at the submission, and I also had a look at some of the previous appearances before the committee in relation to the Port River Expressway and, indeed, the appearances before us in relation to consultancies and other matters.

I support this project—and, indeed, we have previously said that we thought it was a bit odd that it was not being proceeded with at that point in time. I think the point that was made either by Mr Steele or you, Mr O'Loughlin, was that it would be dependent, over the longer term, on some additional funding that may or may not be forthcoming, depending on discussions with the commonwealth. We know that there is \$12 million of commonwealth funding and, naturally, the committee assumes that that is what is going to facilitate this project.

At the time of the previous questioning, there were those (and I will use very base terms here and paraphrase it) who thought it was dumb that you were not proceeding with this project at that point in time. Now, when we read the submission, it seems that it would have been dumb for it not to proceed.

I guess my simple question is this. Something that was really so important to the overall project, irrespective of its being dependent upon the funding—that is, it was crucial to the success of the project—was not going to be proceeded with at that point in time. Was it really that you knew how important it was but you were using some type of negotiation skills to extract money from the commonwealth, or was it that you were fair dinkum at that stage that it would not proceed unless there was additional funding? At that time, it was not going to proceed. Today, it would be dumb if it did not proceed, and we are going to proceed with it. I do not know whether or not that is a simple question, but I am interested in the machinations that have occurred to get us where we are today.

MR O'LOUGHLIN: I am happy to respond to that. You would like to say that there was some kind of overall master strategy that ended up getting the money out of the commonwealth, but that would not be true. Really, I think that there are two separate bits to it. The first is that, when this first went to parliament, it was known as the Gillman Highway, and it was one single, whole project. Within what was, by South Australian standards, a very large project we thought that, because of its size, we had some room to move on scope.

So, we always expected to be able to accommodate the South Road overpass one way or another. I would have to say that, when it became dissembled into the three parts, with the first part going ahead, our flexibility in that regard was less and we simply had to bid for commonwealth funding for that one aspect of the project. When we were unable to secure the funding quite to the level that we were looking for, something had to give, and we basically got down to the only discretionary part of the scope. If you tried to cut anything else, you would not have a road.

237 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: I guess it is safe to say that it is the component of the project which, even though it was not allowed for originally, would have been so difficult to have completed after the project itself was completed without that being part of it, from a danger or an inconvenience point of view, etc. From my personal perspective I congratulate you on being able to facilitate a way by which this is going to be part of the project, because it very much makes common sense.

MR O'LOUGHLIN: Thank you for that. As the submission points out, the case for the project going ahead has become stronger over time, with the things that have changed, particularly the rail movements.

238 MR KOUTSANTONIS: In your submission, under Expected Outcomes and a little later under Proposed Scope Changes, you talk about decreased travel time, with easy access for heavy vehicles, including B doubles and road trains travelling to Port Adelaide. Under Proposed Scope Changes you say that the IRC will generate approximately 1 000 vehicles per day, increasing to 2 000 vehicles per day over a three to five-year period. You have some studies that estimate that the entire precinct, when fully developed, could ultimately generate about 58 000 trips per day. I am concerned about the route that people are going to take to get to Gillman.

Later in your submission you talk about an access point being proposed to construct sections of the Hanson Road between Wilkins Road, Railway Terrace, and including crossings of the railway line. You state that this will provide a ready link from Marion Road, via Holbrooks Road, Eastern Parade, Kilkenny Road and Hanson Road to the Port River Expressway. That cuts through my electorate, the member for Colton's electorate, the Attorney-General's electorate and your minister's electorate. That 58 000 trips per day (or 1 000 B doubles) going down either South Road or that particular route seems excessive. It was my understanding that government policy to divert B doubles away from Portrush Road

to South Road had been scrapped and that Portrush Road was the preferred option for interstate freight coming in, and there would be an access way down to either Port Wakefield Road or the Gillman site.

MR O'LOUGHLIN: Portrush Road is certainly a designated freight route for heavy vehicles, and there is no suggestion that it not be available for that purpose. As you know, a lot of money has been spent on it and it forms part of the network. In terms of the overall freight strategy, what we are looking at at the moment is better projects that will deliver better road and rail access for freight through the north part of the city and in to the port, partly to avoid the sort of situation that you are talking about and partly to provide for smoother and faster movements of freight to and from the port. So, to deal with the last part, I think the situation is very much as we have advised this committee previously.

My colleagues may want to comment on the 58 000. As the submission states, there is this estimate of 58 000 movements eventually, of which 20 000 movements are the subject of the Hanson Road overpass, which we are talking about here. Do I presume from the question that you are referring mostly to the other 38 000 or to the whole 58 000?

239 MR KOUTSANTONIS: I am concerned about the route you want these B doubles to take to get to the Hanson Road overpass.

MR O'LOUGHLIN: The broad conceptual thing is that 20 000 of them are estimated to come in over the Hanson Road overpass and most of the other up to 38 000 are estimated to come in through Eastern Parade.

240 MR KOUTSANTONIS: In terms of the South Road overpass, you said that the use of the South Road level crossing by long freight trains has increased from 20 per cent to 30 per cent per week but increases to 50 per week by 2011. It talks about increasing interruptions to South Road traffic from level crossings significantly reducing the effectiveness of signal coordination on South Road and undermining the effective operation of traffic signals at the South Road junction with the Port River Expressway. Can you explain to me what you are actually talking about there? Are you talking about widening South Road? Are you talking about South Road being an ineffective arterial road for that freight?

MR ELFORD: At the moment there are traffic signals on the intersection of South Road and Grand Junction Road and, as you go further north, there are signals at Cormack Road. You also have the railway crossing under active protection. To try to actually accommodate that flow of traffic along South Road without any widening, just South Road as it exists now, you want to try to make your signals coordinate so that you get nice free-flowing traffic. The more train movements you have, the more those dingers and boom gates come down and the harder it is to get a good, efficient flow of traffic. As the projected number of train movements has increased, it makes it harder actually to get that efficient flow of vehicles on South Road.

241 MR KOUTSANTONIS: My next question is about the environmental impact. The Department of Environment and Heritage has some problems with Barker Wetlands, with the take-up of land and the interruption to that, and is worried about the pollution that will enter the inlet from rubber, diesel, or whatever it is. What are you doing about keeping that clean?

MR O'LOUGHLIN: There are a couple of quite good maps that it might be worth taking you through. We have looked at this in some detail and are convinced that our involvement will be of benefit to the wetlands, as Mr Goode will explain.

242 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: On our field tour down there we actually discussed how the work there would be a benefit to the water flow into the wetlands. You might explain that.

MR GOODE: We had a lot of discussions with DEH, which actually owns the land, and we have two issues. We have to acquire the land from them, and they are very concerned that we do not actually affect the—

243 MR KOUTSANTONIS: Is it crown land?

MR GOODE: Yes, it is.

244 MR KOUTSANTONIS: What is its designated use?

MR GOODE: Its designated use is wetlands.

245 MR KOUTSANTONIS: What process do you go through to get an exemption?

MR GOODE: We have powers to compulsorily acquire land for roadworks purposes, so we can do that even on other government land. We said to them, 'There's an opportunity actually to improve the wetlands. We are going to be going through these wetlands: can we improve them?' We got a consultant on board who said that as a matter of fact there were some things that did not work when they first built them, and that there were quite a few problems. So, by building this we can do other things that help. In particular, if you look at the right-hand side of the plan, you will note that the colour is light compared to the purple colour in the middle.

To the east there are big drains which provide good quality water into the wetlands. To the east there is very good quality water that comes into the wetlands. To the west we have the drain along South Road which is quite polluted. So you will get murky water mixing with good water. The Port Adelaide council, which looks after this area, was hoping to sell off some of the water in the future. We intend building a wall. By building a levy wall between the two areas, we can separate the good water and the not-so-good water, which gives

them an opportunity to have better quality, not murky, water which they can sell off to make a little bit of money and which is better for the environment.

246 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: Can you clarify how they were going to sell the good quality water coming from the east? To whom are they going to sell it?

MR GOODE: I do not know. Port Adelaide Enfield council has plans to sell it.

MR O'LOUGHLIN: I know a little about this because of work we are doing within the public service on stormwater management. It is the hope they can realise something like Salisbury has been able to do with Michells, a lower quality sort of product.

MR GOODE: It is more planned. They also have a problem with flooding from the sea. They did not build the levy banks the right height. We will raise the levy banks so they can flood it better to encourage seagrass and mangroves to grow back. There are a few issues such as that, so we have had the opportunity to improve it.

247 MR KOUTSANTONIS: You say in the document that most of the concerns that DEH raise are dealt with. But they are concerned at the level of public consultation.

MR GOODE: Yes.

248 MR KOUTSANTONIS: When I first got this document about a week ago, I was reading it to try to find what you had done to overcome that. You have done a fair bit about the wetlands and coastal flooding and dealing with flooding to try to improve it. I think that deals with bird life and everything else.

Page 24 states that you envisage that wetlands rangers will have a management input to the construction works as they proceed and that these will address most concerns raised by DEH. Is the public consultation a concern about the wetlands rangers or a concern about residents or action groups that are somehow linked to the wetlands?

MR GOODE: It is more the action groups. We have worked particularly hard with the local rangers. We have some concerns with the rangers who manage the wetlands, which are run by Port Adelaide Enfield council. In particular, local birdwatching groups have some concerns about the wetlands, and we intend to speak to them to discuss their concerns.

249 MR KOUTSANTONIS: I think it is an excellent project that should be rushed ahead, but, basically, what you are saying in the submission is, 'Trust us, we will consult and we will do the right thing.' Once we give you this approval, there is not a lot we can do if you do not?

MR O'LOUGHLIN: That is a fair point and I accept it. Virtually every single project we do needs a reasonably high level of community permission. If we do not generate that sort of community permission about which you are talking, not only have we to come back on another project and account to you for that—and we have faith in our capacity to get that community permission to do that—but also we run into the problem through the whole government processes. It is almost a kind of pre-condition for our doing anything. It was a big issue with Portrush Road. At the end of the day it was compromise but we got there. We are saying, 'Please take us on faith.' What I am saying is that it is now so integral to our business and such a key success factor for us that if we do not do it we are not offending this committee and the basis on which it made the report, but we will shoot ourselves in the foot.

250 MR KOUTSANTONIS: I accept that. I know your officers will do everything they can. I do take your word on that. As a matter of principle—and this is no way a reflection on the department or the people running it now—but the principle of the matter is that even after Portrush Road and the western bypass road, issues always come up continuously about consultation. I know you do everything you can. Often it is such a big project and so important to you that you often can lose focus. I know you are trying to bring it back to community consultation. It seems it is happening after the fact. For example, the department is rushing for the approval and then will take care of the consultation. The problem I have is that once you are gone, once you decide to retire and move on, there is a culture of this in the department. If you do not get someone who is a good corporate citizen in your job, or the people who work under you, it comes back to someone on this committee to do it. We have to get these practices in place, no matter who is there.

MR O'LOUGHLIN: You have raised this before. I accept the point. Obviously, there is a special circumstance here where we have got to get the permission to be able to go while the guys are in place and the road is being built. Normally a change to the scope would happen at a much earlier point in the process, so we would have been able to progress the consultation better.

I think it is as big a limiting factor for us as money. If we do not get it right, it will have the same impact upon our business as not having enough money. It is that simple. How I go about it does not matter. It is the people who do the interfacing and community consultation. I think we have relied too much in the past on contractors and external parties. We are trying to develop a capability in the department so we do much more of it ourselves. Ultimately, we are accountable to you for how well we do it; and to the minister and the government for how well we do it. I think to try to purchase the capability externally and sign a contract is not good enough. So it is taking a bit of time.

251 MR KOUTSANTONIS: The government put out a paper which talked about the principles in terms of roads. For example, you have walkways or bike paths so people can use them. If you want to ride from the city to the expressway, will you have bikeways and walkways?

MR O'LOUGHLIN: I know about the bridges, but that is not why we are here.

MR GOODE: On the original scheme we had a separate bike path, but that was deferred because of cost pressures. We are going to have a wider two metre seal, which will be used for bikes. In fact, through the intersection we have a bike path, so they can get through on the two metre wide seal.

252 MR KOUTSANTONIS: On Hanson Road or South Road?

MR GOODE: Both of them.

253 MR KOUTSANTONIS: I can ride my bike from West Beach all the way to Salisbury and there will be a bike path the whole way.

MR GOODE: It will be two metre wide seal, but marked as a bikeway.

254 MR KOUTSANTONIS: What about pedestrians?

MR GOODE: We have not catered for pedestrians because there is no kerbing or guttering along any of this section. It is just an open shoulder. In this case we have not catered for pedestrians.

255 MR KOUTSANTONIS: What would be the cost to cater for pedestrians?

MR GOODE: Quite high because you would have to acquire more land and put it off the road. You have to build it out into the wetlands, basically.

256 MR KOUTSANTONIS: If I wanted to go to the wetlands, and I am walking off the South Road bypass, where do I go?

MR GOODE: You go to the east and there is a little area. There is an information bay.

257 MR KOUTSANTONIS: So I could not walk along the road and look at the wetlands?

MR GOODE: No, it is too dangerous to have people in that area. Even though it is a bike path, we do not want people stopping. It will have a guard rail there, anyway. Apart from that the wetlands are closed. There are tours. You have to arrange tours through Port Adelaide Enfield council.

258 MR KOUTSANTONIS: There are viewing platforms where you park your car and look.

MR GOODE: Yes.

259 MR KOUTSANTONIS: But they are where you are putting your roads, so they will be gone.

MR GOODE: No, the viewing platform is about a kilometre to the east. That will not be affected by this. It will be a good view from the top in a car for the passengers, not the driver.

260 MR KOUTSANTONIS: I thought it was government policy to encourage walkways along all new roads. As long as you have a bike path that is fair enough.

261 MR VENNING: I am pleased we are discussing this. The original Public Works Committee's recommendation was that this be considered. This committee is pleased to have you back. We will not stand in your way. I am very pleased that you are going to do this. I am a bit staggered at the price of \$24 million, but I understand that it would be a lot more if the project was done after the job is opened in a few years' time. I note the expressway goes underneath both of these intersections. What is the height clearance of the expressway?

MR GOODE: Six metres for both of them.

262 MR VENNING: Is that the height of the expressway through the hills?

MR GOODE: Yes, some of the old bridges are actually less than that. 4.6 metres is a requirement for high vehicles that we have to provide, but we make it 6 metres. We have made it to take higher loads than are actually under permit for that route.

263 MR VENNING: I understand the banks are all earth fill. It looks pretty severe. What are you using?

MR GOODE: We will have reinforced embankment walls at the end where the bridges are, and the others are two and a half to one, which can stand up by itself.

264 MR VENNING: Why is the loop on South Road so wide? It seems to go right out into the wetlands. Is that because of the existing land form?

MR GOODE: It is to do with the design speed. Bear in mind that South Road is 70 km/h and we have reduced it to 60 km/h. We did not want to reduce it to too low a speed because it is leading on to a 100 kilometre zone. So, because of the speed of the road, we had to make it a long, sweeping curve. It looks quite big, but even to drive around that would be reasonably tight, so if we made it smaller it would be too dangerous. We actually put that kink at the bottom of the page to slow traffic before it got to this. We had to deliberately put a kink in it.

265 MR KOUTSANTONIS: So you can go around and back down again, can you?

MR GOODE: You do not have to, because you can turn left.

266 MR KOUTSANTONIS: But why have that?

MR GOODE: That is mainly to keep traffic going on South Road so it does not have to stop. Also, on the Port River Expressway heading east, to head south they have to go east and up around to the left. I will describe it. If you want to go south off the Port River Expressway you come along here, up around there and down there. And the South Road traffic just goes straight over there like that.

267 MR VENNING: So that is a two-way road up the top?

MR GOODE: Yes.

268 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: There are no problems with the gradient?

MR GOODE: It will be reasonably steep but not too bad. It is fairly long, and because we have got 6 metres clearance it drops off quickly back to ground level, so it is a fair distance. Because of the kerb, it is not too bad. It is probably steeper to the south, but this would be a fairly gradual gradient.

269 MR VENNING: The difference between the South Road intersection and the Hanson Road intersection is that the Hanson Road intersection is more conventional because the traffic is slower traffic and a lot less. That is why it is built straight under and over, overleaf style.

MR GOODE: Yes. Hanson Road traffic has to stop on the top. There will be signals: there will be lights at the top.

270 MR VENNING: Lights for the Hanson Road traffic only, of course.

MR GOODE: That is right, the PRExy traffic (Port River Expressway traffic) can just keep going.

271 MR VENNING: I notice there are the pipes under the ramps in the floodway. Which way does the water or the tide flow in that area? You will have water entrapped inside the loop, won't you?

MR GOODE: Yes, but we have put some fairly big drains in for the pond. It depends on the water. It is not actually tidal. The tide only comes to those points. This just

relies on water coming from the drainage system for the run-off. So when there is a decent rain, water will get into there and, when it drops off, it will drain out again.

272 MR VENNING: Would you consider, for the sake of nature or whatever, that you could hold water in there by putting in gates on your culverts?

MR GOODE: Yes, you can.

273 MR VENNING: And you could have a wetland.

MR GOODE: That hole is called Keller's hole, and it is 5 metres deep. It is a permanent water hole. In fact, we thought about whether we should fill that in or what we should do, but DEH is very keen to keep that hole, particularly because it had a lot of pollution down the bottom that they do not want disturbed.

274 MR VENNING: I think it would be a real positive to put sluice gates on the inlets and outlets so that you could hold water in there, and even put water in at times and create not an artificial wetland but certainly a controlled wetland. I think it will be a real positive, particularly if it can be seen from every side.

I thought that was a reverse loop, but you have said that it is a two-way road. How many lanes are there each way? Is there one each way?

MR GOODE: No, there are two lanes each way, so four lanes. That is why the price is so high.

275 MR VENNING: Wingfield Road comes to a dead end and does not go anywhere?

MR GOODE: It will be blocked off.

276 MR KOUTSANTONIS: Where is Wingfield Road?

MR GOODE: Wingfield Road is near Hanson Road.

277 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: I recall, and I need to be reminded of the circumstances, that there were discussions between the councils and all parties about the bike path and underground power lines in the original project. I think there was no money available at that stage and it was decided not to proceed with those two components. Have we, through any arrangement, miraculously found money to fix up those two outstanding aspects, or is there any further movement on those?

MR GOODE: No.

278 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: It is as it was presented last time?

MR GOODE: Yes. To turn left onto the expressway from Hanson Road there is only one lane. On Hanson Road heading north and turning left onto the expressway is only one lane.

MR GOODE: I will show you on this huge plan. There is one lane.

279 MR KOUTSANTONIS: Why is there only one lane?

MR GOODE: It would be to do with the traffic count. There is not a lot of traffic turning left because there is probably access from other points.

280 MR KOUTSANTONIS: But your submission said that you are looking at about 58 000 all-up between the two intersections.

MR O'LOUGHLIN: There is 20 000 coming across here, and then 38 000 coming from Eastern Parade.

MR ELFORD: It is also a free-flowing lane.

281 MR KOUTSANTONIS: So there will not be lights here?

MR GOODE: There are lights here, on top.

MR ELFORD: It is a high capacity movement.

282 MR KOUTSANTONIS: What will be the speed limit on this road?

MR GOODE: 90 km/h.

283 MR KOUTSANTONIS: Why not 110 km/h?

MR GOODE: There are a few technical issues. There is a bend further down and there are no lights, so we are concerned about traffic travelling at high speed. It could run off the road at the bend. So, for safety reasons, we have limited it to 90 km/h.

284 MR KOUTSANTONIS: Would you have speed warning alerts telling motorists their speed? Because it is a very long stretch.

MR GOODE: We have not planned for it.

285 MR VENNING: In relation to the Hanson Road intersection again, it goes through into the wetlands area and it says, 'Ultimate layout to be built by others'. Does it have to be built or is it already there?

MR O'LOUGHLIN: That refers to the eco and industrial part.

286 MR VENNING: That goes to the Wingfield Dump, doesn't it? It goes over the expressway, and this says 'Ultimate layout to be built by others'. Is it new or existing?

MR GOODE: In the interim there will be a two-stage approach. The first stage will be just a low-level access, one-way road into Adelaide City Council further to the right of where that is now, and it will not affect the wetlands. When the precinct goes ahead, there will have to be some major work, including new roads. When that is done it will affect that wetland quite seriously, and the plan is to build other wetlands later and a new road will be built along that alignment. But it could be five to 10 years before that happens.

287 MR VENNING: You have just designed this for now and that is another job for another time?

MR O'LOUGHLIN: Yes, but it should be stressed that 'to be built by others' includes not only the environmental things that Mr Goode is talking about but also all of the commercial negotiations, because there will be some direct and significant beneficiaries of the infrastructure. So there needs to be some commercial negotiation as well when the time comes.

288 MR VENNING: On the same road but further west, we have bridges. There have been a lot of politics played over this but after I ask these questions you may wish to go off the record with the answer. I am the first to admit that it is a very political situation. This committee would like to be able to do a feasibility study on whether a lifting bridge can be justified on the third river crossing. On or off the record, first, can you say whether the department has done any work in relation to the difference in costs; and, secondly, is it justified?

MR O'LOUGHLIN: Can I answer the second question first? I am happy to stay on the record. Clearly, just as we have come forward with the report on stage 1, the process is that when cabinet has endorsed it, we will be back here with a report on stages 2 and 3, and that issue will be addressed in that report. Obviously, we are available to be questioned by the committee at that time. On the issue itself, the Minister for Infrastructure answered a question in parliament, I think a week ago, which is the latest exposition of the government's policy.

289 MR VENNING: I thought that the minister's answer was very good and I had to 'Hear, hear' a couple of things against my own party. You have to understand the politics of this and that there is very strong opinion on both sides of the political fence.

290 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: Is it not fair to say, too, that Mr O'Loughlin, Mr Elford and Mr Goode are not in a position to answer or even entertain questions of a political nature? I do not mind you asking them.

291 MR VENNING: My concern is that he is talking about this report. I am concerned about the delay. As a result of the indecision that is occurring, I would like this committee to give itself a reference and do the hard yards in relation to whether this extra cost can be justified. Mr O'Loughlin will have to look after his master, that is, the minister, who is a member of cabinet, but, in the end, it is the extra cost and extra time (I presume), and there are problems forever after about a lifting bridge. It is okay if it is justified.

MR O'LOUGHLIN: I know you appreciate this position; that is, the format for the report requires us to justify all the costs and to submit them all to cost benefit analysis and net present value analysis; and when we are back here with the report on stages 2 and 3, I am sure all that information will be in it.

292 MR VENNING: When will that be?

MR O'LOUGHLIN: I cannot answer that question.

293 MR VENNING: I do not expect you to break rank, so to speak, in relation to your opinion but, from what I hear, see and read, it is my opinion that very few boats tie up at the end of the main street (whatever it is called) and that there will be hassles thereafter. I voted against my own party—the first time in 13½ years—because I wanted to give the government complete carte blanche to do what it needed to do as quickly as it could for the overall good of most people and at the most economic cost. When will we see this report?

MR O'LOUGHLIN: As I say, I cannot really answer that question. All I can add is that as a member of parliament you are aware that we have been progressing some of the remaining legislative things that need to be progressed. Notwithstanding that it is still to be formed officially, but the board of Infracorp, the interim board, has met twice and we are trying to progress it as expeditiously as we can.

294 MR VENNING: In your position as the chief executive, do you see any problems with a leaping bridge or extra complications?

295 MS CICCARELLO: Do you want to go off the record?

MR O'LOUGHLIN: Perhaps I will take this opportunity to go off the record.

Hearing proceeded off record

Upon resumption:

296 MR VENNING: Sir Donald Bradman Drive is the responsibility of the council, isn't it?

MR O'LOUGHLIN: The culvert, yes.

297 MR VENNING: I think that it is an absolute disgrace that a major thoroughfare is blocked up every morning. It has been two months now and nothing appears to be happening. Why could they not resurface the road with reinforced concrete and leave what was underneath there?

MR O'LOUGHLIN: Advice to me is that we expect work to start on 1 December. There is even a little chance of it starting earlier. My advice is that by 19 December we expect all project works between Marion Road and Turner Street to be completed.

298 MR VENNING: That is instant work, that is!

MR O'LOUGHLIN: Well, it is if council do it. Obviously, the idea is to have it done before Christmas/New Year.

299 MR KOUTSANTONIS: What, the works? Yesterday, council told me March.

MR O'LOUGHLIN: Advice to me—and I asked about it before coming here today—is that they expect it to begin on 1 December and to be completed by 19 December.

300 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: A radio report quoted the mayor (John Trainer) as saying that they were commencing some work this morning. Given the amount of traffic that seemed to come off Airport and Marion roads, which impeded my travelling to town this morning along Henley Beach Road, a lot of people are starting to turn off that road.

301 MR VENNING: That is incredible, 19 December.

MR O'LOUGHLIN: Sorry, let me emphasise that we are talking about the bit between Marion Road and Turner Street.

302 MR KOUTSANTONIS: Turner Street is the first part.

MR O'LOUGHLIN: That is right.

303 MR KOUTSANTONIS: It is not even a quarter.

MR O'LOUGHLIN: I will make that plain. The whole project is expected to be completed in February.

304 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: That is right. That is what the CE said on the wireless this morning.

305 MR VENNING: I cannot understand how that road is any new road. How is it that your engineers, when they laid that road, did not know what was underneath?

MR O'LOUGHLIN: We are in discussions with the council. Our engineers did know what was underneath: the issue is the structural integrity of the drain that was underneath which, of course, is just like a power cable or anything else a utility has underneath there, which is the responsibility of the provider of it.

306 MR VENNING: Who is meeting the cost of all this?

MR O'LOUGHLIN: Council is meeting all the cost. There is a little bit of discussion about a minor portion of it, which we are getting resolved now.

307 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: This question relates to the project. When we were taken on the tour I think that we were looking at the new section of Eastern Parade, and there were a couple of industries on the right-hand side as we were heading east, or as best east as it was. Symons and Clarke might have been one, and there was another, that were the subject of some discussions with the department at that time. The impression I got was that the businesses were complaining about a lot of the work that was being done and the impact of that; and even the longer-term impact the completed road may have on their businesses.

I want a very brief overview as to whether those issues have been resolved, whether they are ongoing and whether discussions have come to any settlement.

MR GOODE: That relates mainly to stages 2 and 3, which is David Bartlett's area. There are ongoing discussions with respect to those areas because land acquisition is involved. Most of the issues have been resolved. There were some issues about turning movements, mainly about whether we can accommodate road trains, etc. Most of those issues can be accommodated. I do not think there will be a major issue through that section now. We have consulted with every owner along both sides of the road.

308 THE PRESIDING MEMBER: Thank you very much for appearing before the committee today. We are supportive of the project and we will make our best endeavours to get our report in as quickly as possible.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW