

# HUON HIGHWAY OVERTAKING LANES

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



**Q: Why construct overtaking lanes and not a series of slow vehicle turnout lanes?**

**A:** Experience across Australia, now included in national design standards, shows that slow-vehicle turn-outs, or passing bays, are only effective where there are steep grades, traffic volumes are low and the proportion of heavy vehicles is high. These conditions don't exist between Huonville and Geeveston, so slow-vehicle turn-outs wouldn't be effective.

**Q: Why construct overtaking lanes at Sommers Straight and not at other locations?**

**A:** DIER undertook a technical assessment of the highway between Huonville and Geeveston taking into consideration existing speed limits, road alignment and the level of roadside development. The initial assessment identified 6 potential locations with Sommers Straight being the most suitable. The proposed location also provides an alternative to the previously used Palmers Road "rat run".

**Q: Sommers Straight is already used for overtaking so why do you need to do this work?**

**A:** Sommers Straight is recognised as an existing overtaking opportunity on the Huon Highway. However, there are a number of issues at this site:

- It is not an unrestricted overtaking opportunity as there are only two lanes. When vehicles are approaching from both directions it is not always possible to overtake safely.
- Regular users of the Huon Highway know that overtaking opportunities are limited and are taking risks when overtaking at Sommers Straight. There have been a number of reported 'near misses' between through traffic and residents vehicles entering and exiting their properties.
- The road alignment immediately south of Sommers Straight is of a lower standard and there are a number of recorded crashes on the curves north of Fleurty's Road.
- There are no suitable areas for school buses to pull over.

**Q: This proposal seems to be a bit over the top. Can't it be something less 'grand'?**

**A:** The national road design guidelines, *Austrroads Guide to Road Design*, specify the minimum length for overtaking lanes in a 100 km/h speed zone to be 550m, with a desirable length of 950m. This proposal provides a length in the middle of this range. This is not an extravagant proposal in terms of overtaking lanes.

**Q: Why construct two new lanes on the east side of the Highway and not widen the road within the existing road reservation on the west side of the Highway?**

**A:** There is more development on the western side of the Highway than on the east, with several houses very close to the existing road. The ground on the western side also rises sharply from the road. Constructing the extra lanes on the eastern side has less impact on properties.

**Q: The flexible safety barrier limits the direct access to my property and the G-Turn is an inconvenience and adds time to my journey.**

**A:** The flexible safety barrier will slightly increase your travel time, but over a longer journey the increase will be relatively minor. The project will provide benefits that are greater than the inconvenience of small increases in travel time. For example; the barrier and additional lanes will reduce the risk of the near-misses currently being experienced. The G-turn facilities at Braeside Road and Fleurtys Road will provide safer locations for turning movements.

**Q: The flexible safety barrier will increase the time for emergency services to access properties.**

**A:** DIER consults with Police, Ambulance and Fire authorities when developing road projects. Where it is considered necessary by Emergency Services, specific turning or access facilities are provided.

**Q: What about the noise from vehicles increasing speed to overtake?**

**A:** It is unlikely that this project will cause a general increase in vehicle speed and noise. DIER has commissioned a noise study that will provide an understanding of the any changes in noise levels from traffic.