

The Jordan River Levee Site

Alternative Route Review

- After years of planning and more recent reviews of alternative routes proposed by the Aboriginal community, DIER has determined that it has no other option than to proceed on the current alignment and is now investing around \$15 million in a bridge to span the Jordan River levee (JRL).
- The real options for the Tasmanian community are a road on the existing alignment with a bridge or no road at all.
- The Current alignment was determined after decades of planning and assessments including a heritage study of 1996 that found no evidence of Aboriginal values at the current JRL site. DIER had full confidence that the chosen route avoided any heritage sites.
- DIER's Project planning and Brighton Council's settlement planning proceeded on this basis.
- The route selection was a major strategic decision for Government and was made with the best possible information at the time.
- Once the values at the JRL were well understood, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre first proposed an alternative alignment in April 2010 and DIER was asked to respond to the proposal.
- DIER's assessment found the suggested alternative was unsafe and inappropriate for a national highway.
- DIER looked at modified design to meet minimum highway standards. This design that would have been acceptable to the Aboriginal community, would have required acquisition of up to 30 Brighton homes and a cost between \$80 million and \$140 million.
- Furthermore, this route would impact on another levee that has as yet, not been investigated. We now know that the levee in the current alignment can be avoided.

- The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre suggested a modification of their initial proposal. The proposal was assessed and found to still require extensive (but less) demolition of homes and/or construction on the heritage site than contains the levee.
- At the same time, DIER provided comment on a number of routes north and south of the levee but was clear that none were considered practical and feasible.
- Early planning work had dismissed a bypass to the west of Brighton, upgrading the existing highway and connecting to Hobart using alternative routes and crossings of the River Derwent.
- Given alternative routes were not feasible, DIER significantly amended its design so that the important values within the levee deposit were not impacted at all by development.
- In summary, the review very clearly shows that the alternative routes are not practical. The main issues related to realigning the highway either to the north or the south, are additional curves, reduction in sight distance, difficult geotechnical conditions, the massive quantities of earthworks to build a road that meets national standards, the required demolition of a significant number of homes, rail realignment and the effect on other anticipated heritage sites. The enormous cost of such a route change which is in the vicinity of \$80 million - \$140 million is not warranted, particularly given we can demonstrate that we can protect the levee whilst at the same time being able to sensitively construct a bridge.

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