

TALSC
Submission

Norm McIlfatrick
Secretary
Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources
10 Murray Street
Hobart 7000
GPO BOX 936
Hobart Tasmania 7001

25th June 2010

Dear Mr. McIlfatrick,

When initial Aboriginal Heritage assessments were done at the Jordan River levee on the Brighton Bypass route, AHO's and Archaeologists uncovered a site that they had never seen before. This site is the oldest site found in Tasmania and one of the oldest of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere. The information gained about the Jordan Valley has told us a story about a time when Aboriginal people walked the land and lived within the landscape. A place where they lived, died, birthed, married, danced, sang, hunted, gathered, ate, traded, came together and existed through the ice age and evolution for 40,000 years or more.

The controversial Brighton Bypass development has caused much attention publicly because Tasmanian Aboriginal people and supporters have banded together to save the site at the Jordan River Levee section. The substantial cultural, historical and social significance of this ancient landscape is astronomical and it's the opinion of the people involved, that the integrity of the landscape that encases this site, must be preserved.

This site has been subject to a great deal of interest from not only the wider communities of Tasmania, but also people world wide because of its potential historical and scientific significance of human habitation - much older than Tasmanian History written by invaders, immigrants and visitors to Trowanna (Tasmania) over the past few centuries.

People now have a better understanding of Aboriginal heritage more widely and more people are really beginning to connect with irreplaceable Tasmanian Aboriginal heritage and cultural places. Our old people left these places behind for us all to find and preserve and learn from. This is about something important and meaningful, that many know little about.

Following recent meetings with DIER representatives, TALSC have undertaken a state-wide community consultation in addition to many meetings that have been held with the Aboriginal community over recent months, regarding the bridge proposal at the Jordan Levee.

We now write this to you outlining the concerns which are included in the records from our consultation. You will note that the community response to this proposal is firm, that other road

route options must be explored in order to protect and preserve the integrity of the landscape that the Jordan Levee sits within.

The community have thought long and hard about the impacts that this development has had on our heritage and we have also thought long and hard about the implications that our views may have on the wider community. However, we strongly believe that this place, in its entirety, will be beneficial to all Tasmanian through learning and understanding the importance of protecting places like this. We are collective in our strong view that Aboriginal people have again been pushed to the bottom of the priority pile and disregarded by DIER in the vital early stages of this particular project.

We note that there has been some research done by engineers into other possibilities for the Brighton Bypass to move forward without impacting the Jordan Levee site with a bridge. DIER representatives have advised us that these options will not be considered because of the time this will take and the costs associated with the alternative routes. Quite frankly this is no reason to ignore other alternative outcomes for this project to proceed while maintaining the integrity of this ancient place.

Although we realise that at the end of the day, this will be a matter for the Minister to decide, we find it appalling that your department has pushed through the construction of this project closer to the Levee site despite the fact that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people protested and voiced their concern at a time when the other route options could have been put into place. We believe that we have been pushed into a corner through DIER's actions when your department proceeded heavily with this road without proper consultation and reasonable timeframes for the wider Aboriginal community to voice their concerns.

Given that tens of millions of tax payer dollars goes into other areas for causes that may seem important to the state government, your department and the state government must acknowledge that Tasmanian Aborigines are too tax payers and their interests must be respected regarding this proposal. If it is going to cost more money to re route the road, then we ask you to commit to finding these funds and moving forward with the alternative options available to you. After all, its not that requests such as this have ever been made by the Aboriginal community, and provided that a more clear and transparent process is followed by developers now and in the future, we do not foresee requests like this being made again.

Many other significant areas within the Brighton landscape have already been destroyed during the development of the Brighton Bypass and the government must now make amends and a commitment to protect and preserve the Jordan Levee area. There are ways your department can move forward on the Brighton Bypass project that ensures the best interests of ALL Tasmanians, but the question is, are the Tasmanian Government willing to make this commitment?

Kind Regards,




Fiona Newson

Manager


Tasmanian Aboriginal Land and Sea Council


Community Consultations


This consultation was undertaken with 30 people in Burnie, Launceston and Hobart. All consultation material has been put together as one document for a submission to DIER. TALSC gave all community people involved a full description of the proposal, including a presentation of the Ariel view of the bridge proposal provided to us by DIER. This consultation is in addition to many community meetings that have been held with the TALSC and TAC.


 - TALSC staff


 - Community people


 Colin gave an overview of the proposed bridge over the Jordon River site.


 Fiona advised that DIER is planning to apply for a permit in to partially destroy.


 They have already nearly finished the Bypass, they won't stop now, and will they move the bridge? Or give us something in return?


 FN - They have said that they would open access to 5% of the site which is DIER owned land.


 Who owns the rest of the site?

 What area would the community be able to access?

 How do we access the site?

 FN- Other government dept's and private landholders own the remainder of the land that is part of the site, the DIER land can be accessed from a public road.

 Well! They can't even give us access to the whole site!

 I drove through the area and couldn't believe the amount of work that has already taken place. Seems like we never had a chance in the first place. They even kept constructing to towards the site regardless of the fact that they should have stopped and considered other avenues first.

Doesn't agree with proposal however is glad that engineers have considered other options to avoid the site, and they should go with one of them and if they don't, she would like to see community get something in return.

Has concerns that there is not enough info available from government, and wants to see the best possible outcome for the community.

Are the TALSC and the TAC working together with this?

Fiona explained that TALSC and TAC are working strongly to achieve the best outcome for the community.

It's good that TALSC are starting to get up the North West and keeping everyone informed. Putting names to places is important.

Colin explained that the Brighton bypass has opened up discussions for protecting Aboriginal heritage to the broader community.

Opposes the DIER Bridge proposal

Why didn't this consultation happen before it started?

Colin explained that the works started before consultations had started. The proper assessment didn't take place.

What is the next move from the developers?

Colin explained the bridge proposal, and how they are going to do it.

Is there any other options?

What do we do when the site is gone? Another sacred place destroyed by them.

Why can't they divert the road?

They are saying because of cost and of National Road Standards requirements and costs for extra land acquisition and other costs associated with diverting the road. Plus they have already constructed all the way up to the Jordan.

Why did they keep going with the construction? When I was there at the second protest, they were a long way away...they should have stopped the construction then to seriously consider other routes! This is disgusting!

Colin advised that there is a permit to partially destroy, and gave a description of map.

would rather see the road diverted, if they diverted the road for a heritage listed house, they can divert it for this site. The main thing is to protect the heritage.

We want to access the whole site. More than what is on offer, this is not good enough. Why are they offering that? Why can't we have all the site area? It's just like being back on Cape Barren and having the boundaries around the reserve, and we weren't allowed to cross them either. And the hole in the wall at the Whitemark pub, we couldn't go into the pub because we are black, so they gave us our drink through the hole in the wall. We have always been controlled. When will they start to take us seriously and allow us to keep our sacred place? And not with a bridge either, as it should be. The boundaries of the site must not be crossed they say, Even though it's our heritage we can not go there.

This is about protecting the landscape, where the artefacts were found.

How much was paid to private land owners? If they are going to ignore us and destroy it and put the bridge there, the community should be compensated for the destruction of our heritage and landscape.

No the bridge should not go ahead.

Thinks it's insulting to build a bridge over the site.

This place should be preserved; we should continue to do what ever it takes to protect the preservation of the landscape surrounding this site.

ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS STRONGLY OPPOSE THE BRIDGE PROPOSAL.