

RESPONSE TO PETITION

Petition No. 42-22 of 2022

PARLIAMENT of TASMANIA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

The petitioners ask the House to:

The recent flood related damage to the Cam River bridge, the need for a full investigation of causes of the damage and consultation around the provision of a dual river crossing to compliment the new bridge being currently constructed.

1. Conduct a thorough and open review into all issues surrounding:
 - a) The causes of the damage to the Cam River Bridge related to heavy rainfalls and the concurrent construction of a replacement bridge;
 - b) The subsequent repairs of/and temporary closure of one lane of the Cam River Bridge at Somerset since Thursday, 20 October 2022; and
 - c) Publicly release information and findings of the reviews, in a timely manner.
2. Retain the current Cam River Bridge until a full and proper analysis is undertaken to identify possible alternative routes across the Cam River to prevent this situation or other events that could result in closure of all or part of the Cam River bridge happening again; and
3. Ensure the process utilised to undertake a full and proper analysis to identify possible alternative routes utilises direct and inclusive community and stakeholder engagement processes that assesses all options for another viable Cam River crossing including, but not limited to:
 - a) Retention of the current Cam River bridge after the new bridge is constructed
 - b) A second new bridge at the current or an alternate location; and
 - c) Upgrades of current alternative routes such as Oonah Road.

GOVERNMENT POSITION:

- The recent extreme weather event was the main cause of material being washed out from under one of the bridge piers. There are no plans to conduct any further review.
- The existing bridge will remain until the new bridge currently under construction is operational and will then be removed as it is nearing the end of its design life.
- The Department of State Growth will undertake a feasibility study for a second Cam River Bridge crossing that includes community consultation with the residents of Waratah-Wynyard, Circular Head and Burnie municipalities. The feasibility study is expected to begin in 2023 and will take approximately 12 months to complete, which includes the time for community engagement.

RESPONSE:

- The Department of State Growth's position is that the damage was caused by the recent weather events. The large increase in water and speed of water flow from the recent floods was the main cause of material being washed out from under one of the bridge piers.
- The department reduced the Cam River Bridge to one lane on 20 October 2022 while repairs took place. Two-lane operation was restored on 1 November 2022 with a reduced speed limit as an additional safety precaution. The department is continuing to monitor the bridge's stability to make sure there is no further movement.
- The temporary lane closure was implemented to move traffic away from the side of the bridge where the pier with the damaged footing was located, which was the second pier from the Burnie end. This was to reduce vibration on that side of the bridge, which could lead to further deterioration. The department received engineering advice that this measure would allow the bridge to remain safely open to one lane. The bridge was actively monitored while the repairs were carried out to ensure it remained safe. The damaged area was repaired with concrete, and the pier columns were also strengthened and infilled with reinforced concrete. The repaired bridge has been assessed by structural engineers and works have been completed to ensure that it is safe to use.
- The need for a new bridge was identified as part of the Bass Highway: Cooe to Wynyard Planning Study in 2019 and planning and design work for the new bridge began soon after. Replacing the Cam River Bridge is a key project under the \$50 million Bass Highway – Cooe to Wynyard Program, which is jointly funded by the Australian and Tasmanian Governments. The existing bridge will remain operational until the new bridge is complete, when the existing bridge will be demolished.

- The department will undertake a feasibility study for a second Cam River Bridge crossing that includes community consultation with the residents of Waratah-Wynyard, Circular Head and Burnie municipalities. This study will consider all possible location options for a second bridge, the need for and nature of a second bridge and alternate route options for the Bass Highway between Burnie and Wynyard. The feasibility study is expected to begin in 2023 and will take approximately 12 months to complete, which includes the time for community engagement.
- The new Cam River Bridge currently under construction is scheduled for completion in 2023.
- Oonah Road is not part of the State Road network but is owned and managed by Burnie City Council and Waratah-Wynyard Council. The department will discuss with both councils any local roads could potentially be involved as part of the feasibility study for the second bridge.



Hon Michael Ferguson MP

Minister for Infrastructure and Transport

Date: 16 January 2023