

Monique De Carli  
Communications & Engagement  
Regional Roads Victoria

20 September 2020

Dear Monique,

Re: **Phillip Island Road Corridor Project**

Thank you for the online meeting with you, Denis Heily and Michael Mattingley on 15 September 2020.

As you know our key concern with the Newhaven part of the project is to see protection of the avenue of mature golden cypress trees located just off the bridge as you enter Phillip Island. These trees are classified by the National Trust, as you are aware - see the link here to the relevant citation and images.

[http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/search/nattrust\\_result\\_detail/202490](http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/search/nattrust_result_detail/202490)

In reviewing the plans we wish to set out the following points that we generally covered in our meeting with you.

Firstly we believe the road project should seek to protect the golden cypress trees as far as practicable and we are pleased that you are investigating all options to achieve this, including engaging specialist arborist advice.

As we discussed, the heritage of these trees is not only significant to Newhaven but to Phillip Island as a whole. There is a complementary avenue of golden cypress trees in Thompson Avenue, Cowes, where the Bass Coast Shire Council has successfully maintained the mature trees within a heavily paved and busy traffic street, over many years.

Additional planting of the same species has also been carried out in Cowes to maintain the continuity of the avenue where necessary, in particular where older trees have suffered damage or in the very few cases, declined due to bad health and condition.

We submit that there would seem to be opportunities and options to maximise protection of the Newhaven avenue - through careful placement of bus stops, location of walking paths, service roads and in selection of an appropriate tree friendly pavement finish/treatment for the ancillary access ways.

There is also the question of whether the dual lane highway needs to commence at the bridge (given the present bridge only has capacity for one lane in each direction) and instead be commenced at the Boys Home Road roundabout.

This alternative scenario could accommodate a new roundabout at Forrest Avenue as well as the other road enhancements proposed, while limiting the lane capacity, like the bridge, to one lane in each direction up to Boys Home Road.

This option would obviously maximise protection of the avenue of golden cypress trees, would present a calmer and safer traffic situation for local residents including school children, especially around Graydens Reserve, and lessen the impact of a dual lane highway on the character and streetscape amenity of Newhaven on entrance to the island.

What is clearly absent from the present exhibition is an understanding of the road strategy for Phillip Island and whether the Newhaven project, as presently planned, may actually pre-empt a decision on a dual highway across the island into Cowes .

New roundabouts at the Woolamai Beach Road intersection and Back Beach Road, together with the Newhaven leg, certainly have the appearance of a piecemeal approach, rather than being based on an overall strategy.

Perhaps the question that should be answered first is whether a dual lane highway from Newhaven to Cowes is an appropriate strategy for the island. Such a question raises broader issues around the natural environment of the island, landscape and scenic values, heritage and township character, and consideration of other options available to best handle increasing visitor numbers and tourist traffic. Expanding public transport (including bus shuttle services), cycling/walking and limitations on visitor numbers at peak periods can be alternatives and respond well to an eco tourism environment.

In short, preserving the integrity of the destination, not detracting from it, should be the outcome of a coherent strategy for Phillip Island. In this regard we encourage Regional Roads Victoria to engage with Council and the community to first settle the strategy before committing to a set design for Newhaven.

Regards,

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National Trust Bass Coast Branch

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