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PRIME MINISTER

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DERWENT BRIDGE STUDY

Detailed investigation of the river bed is under way for the permanent bridge across the Derwent from Dowsing Point.

In a joint statement today the Premier Mr Neilson, and the Prime Minister, Mr Fraser, said that the first progress report covering the period up to 31 March 1976 had been received from the Joint Committee on the Second Hobart Bridge established by the Commonwealth and State Governments. The Report indicated that the investigatory drilling programme began on March 9. The first stage was intended to cover the total length of the proposed bridge. It should be complete within four months.

A barge mounted drilling rig was supplied and operated by the Mines Department while the Public Works Department was providing direct supervision of the field work and all laboratory testing of the material encountered.

Good progress had been made with preparatory work for the second permanent crossing since the Joint Committee was set up to arrange and co-ordinate investigation and design for the bridge and its road approaches.

The firm of Maunsell and Partners had been appointed Consulting Engineers for the design of the bridge and related investigations and studies. Eight alternative design concepts were being appraised for the new bridge which would cross the Derwent just north of the present temporary bridge.

Mr Neilson and Mr Fraser said further drilling would follow the present initial investigations to provide enough information at each pier and abutment location to enable all foundations to be designed with confidence as to founding level and foundation conditions.

An investigation of velocities and directions of river currents at various depths near the proposed crossing had been started by the Hydro-Electric Commission. This information would be necessary for the study of pier protection.

A tentative programme for the investigations, studies and design of the Bridge indicated that design and documentation to the stage where tenders could be called would be achieved in the second half of next year.

Four closely related studies concerned with the impact of a second permanent crossing in Hobart had begun and should be available to the Joint Committee within four months. The consulting firm of Atkins Meinhardt was conducting a study of river transport as it might affect the design of the Bridge.

The development impact would be assessed by Nicholas Clark and Associates, while P.G. Pak Poy and Associates would report on traffic impact.

Mr Neilson and Mr Fraser said an important issue was the effect of the Bridge on the natural environment and the local community. The firm of M.S.T. Keys-Young would investigate this matter.

It was possible the new Bridge would offer an alternative route into Hobart for the national highway from northern Tasmania and the Commonwealth Bureau of Roads had been commissioned by the Commonwealth Minister for Transport (Mr Nixon) to carry out a study of the optional corridors.

The Public Works Department was co-ordinating all the investigations and studies and also was carrying out planning and design of the road approach system and its connections into the Glenorchy area.

Mr Neilson and Mr Fraser said that close liaison was necessary between the various consultants and a number of local councils and other authorities. Arrangements were being made to ensure that the attitude and opinions of all authorities and the public were obtained and carefully considered.

The Joint Committee's Reports on all investigations were expected to fully cover the consequences of the decision to build a new Bridge and the findings should be of great benefit to planning development in the Hobart area.

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