



PRIME MINISTER

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 520
20 June 1975

EMBARGO: 6 p.m.

JOINT PRESS STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE PREMIER OF TASMANIA

The Prime Minister (Mr Whitlam) and the Premier of Tasmania (Mr Neilson) announced their general agreement with the recommendations of the Joint Expert Advisory Committee on the second Derwent River crossing at Hobart.

They also announced that an immediate start would be made on detailed investigation and design for a second bridge and road approaches at Dowsings Point. The bridge, to be of concrete box construction, would be designed to be compatible with the attractive natural environment in the vicinity of Dowsing Point. It would carry four traffic lanes and, with approaches, is estimated to cost \$21 million.

Detailed investigation and design of the second bridge would be carried out under the auspices of a new Joint Committee to be constituted by the two Governments. When firm information becomes available as a result of these studies, an environmental impact statement will be prepared. The statement will incorporate details of the studies already undertaken on alternative locations and give due regard to the location and design of the proposed bridge, the changes to the metropolitan road systems and consequential effects of land use on both banks of the Derwent.

Mr Whitlam and Mr Neilson said that the two Governments would have discussions on the timing for construction of the new bridge, procedures for the further studies and their assessment and the financial arrangements involved.

It was expected that investigations and design and preparation of contract documents would take about 18 months. The timing of actual construction would need to be keyed to completion of reconstruction of the Tasman Bridge.

Mr Whitlam gave an undertaking that the Bridge and associated roadworks would be funded by the Australian Government up to the cost applicable to a bridge of 15 metres vertical clearance.

Mr Neilson said that he and Mr Whitlam had discussed the question of land use involved in areas made more accessible by the second crossing. He had given the Prime Minister an undertaking that appropriate measures would be exercised by the State Government to control land sub-division and development pending the completion and adoption of the planning study currently being undertaken by the Southern Metropolitan Master Planning Authority. This could probably be achieved within existing powers, but, if necessary, special legislation would be introduced.

The Prime Minister and the Premier said that construction of the second bridge should aid the future economic and integrated development of the Hobart metropolitan area and, therefore, it was essential to warn the public that appropriate control measures, operative as from today, would be taken to achieve this end. Land speculators should beware.

The Prime Minister and the Premier said that the future role of the Tasman Bridge after its restoration to trafficable conditions was discussed by the Advisory Committee. It has reported that it was feasible to widen the bridge to accommodate five (instead of four) traffic lanes, and that this work could be completed while the restoration work was being carried out. The estimated cost was put at about \$3 million, and the Prime Minister had agreed that the Australian Government would meet this cost. Accordingly, they would ask the Joint Tasman Bridge Restoration Committee to make arrangements for the carrying out of this work concurrently with its major task of bridging the gap. This, they said, would greatly enhance the carrying capacity of the bridge, particularly during peak hour.

Mr Neilson said that he would be meeting representatives of affected metropolitan councils in Hobart within a few days to discuss the report and the implications for the environment and people of Hobart arising from the Joint Committee's recommendations.

The Prime Minister and the Premier paid tribute to the work of the Joint Committee. They said that its task had been formidable, but, through close co-operation its members had produced a clear, concise report in a short time.

CANBERRA; A.C.T.