

UR1975-10

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A threat of rockfall on the Wilmot Main Road.

P.C. Stevenson

The locality [DQ371319], about 900 m north of the Paloona Bridge turn-off on the Wilmot Main Road was examined on 15th January 1975 at the suggestion of Dr E.A. Colhoun of the University of Tasmania.

At this point the main road is close to the Forth River and the upper side of the road is formed by a cut in coarse cemented gravel. The cut is in two lifts, each about 4 m high, separated by a narrow berm. Above the gravel, soft clayey silt about 5 m thick and derived at least partially from weathered basalt has slumped and been rain-washed down over the contact with the gravel.

About 4 m of fresh, strongly vertical-jointed basalt overlies the silt, and forms an extensive plateau to the west.

A slice of basalt over a scarp length of about 30 m and about 5 m wide has dropped down due to failure of the silt, and blocks of basalt up to 12 m³ have moved 4 m vertically and towards the road. This appears to have happened in the last few days from the freshness of the soil disturbance, and the freshness of the uprooted trees and there seems no reason why movement should not continue. If it does, large blocks will fall onto the main road and could also cause failure in the gravel cuts.

No great volume of water is apparent although a few litres per minute is seeping from the silt, and the drainage ditch on the gravel berm is clogged with vegetation and clay.

[21 January 1975]