



## Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee

**Petition Number:** [PE1540](#)

**Main Petitioner:** Douglas Philand

**Subject:** Calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to ensure that a permanent solution for the A83 at Rest and be thankful ensuring the vital lifeline route is not closed because of landslides

### Background

The A83 is a 98 mile long trunk road linking Tarbet and Campbeltown. Trunk roads are owned by Scottish Ministers and managed by Transport Scotland. The day to day maintenance of each trunk road is carried out by a Trunk Road Operating Company, in the case of the A83 this is [BEAR Scotland](#).

The Rest and be Thankful is the summit of the pass on the A83 trunk road between Arrochar and Inveraray, an area that is particularly prone to landslips. The A83 has been closed at the Rest and be Thankful due to landslips in November 2014, March 2014, November 2012, June 2012, February 2012, December 2011, September 2009 and October 2007. Prior to 2013, and the provision of a diversionary route, the closure of the A83 at the Rest and be Thankful required motorists to take a lengthy diversion. Transport Scotland [advises](#) that this diversion adds 25 miles to each trip, typically adding an extra 31 minutes to the journey time.

### Scottish Government Action

Transport Scotland commissioned transport consultants Jacobs to undertake the A83 Route Study, the [final report](#) of which was published in February 2013. A key element of this study ([Part A](#)) was the development of six options for reducing the incidence and impact of landslides on the operation of the A83. Jacobs recommended that Transport Scotland proceed with the "red option", which it describes as "...an additional 440m of debris flow barriers...measures to improve the hillside drainage adjacent to and under the road. The planting of vegetation may also help contribute to this strategy through the beneficial effects of vegetation would be realised during a period of 15 to 35 years after planting"

Transport Scotland accepted this recommendation and all debris netting and upgraded drainage is now in place, with hillside planting in the planning stage.

In addition to action to reduce the incidence and impact of landslides, Transport Scotland also upgraded the Old Military Road at the Rest and be Thankful. This provides a diversionary route that can be used when the main A83 is closed at the Rest and be Thankful, although it may not always be suitable depending on the location of any landslip. While the diversion has limited capacity, with vehicles operating in one-way convoys, it substantially reduces the impact of a closure of the A83 at this point. The Old Military Road was used in the most recent closure of the A83 at the Rest and be Tankful, in November 2014. While the debris netting was overwhelmed by the size of that landslip, it did hold back between 1000 and 1200 tonnes of debris – including many boulders, some the size of small cars.

## **Scottish Parliament Action**

The Scottish Parliament's Public Petitions Committee previously considered [petition PE1428](#) regarding improvements to the A83, including at the Rest and be Thankful. The petition was closed on 3 September 2013 as the Scottish Government was taking action on all points raised in that petition, including the upgrades to the A83 at the Rest and be Thankful and Old Military Road.

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