



**Hon. Tim Clifford MLC**  
Member for East Metropolitan Region

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Legislative Council Committee Office  
18-32 Parliament House  
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Hon Matthew Swinbourn



**Re: Petition No. 1281 - Murdoch Drive connection Project**

I am pleased to provide a submission supporting this petition requesting that works be set aside until a new fit for purpose road that better integrates public transport is designed.

I commend to the Committee the tabling party, Kate Kelly, who is convenor of the Save Beelias Wetlands group. This group has previously undertaken significant legal actions regarding construction of roads in and around the Beelias Wetlands. They have experienced success in some of these actions, notably in 2015 when the Supreme Court made a decision that the Environmental Protection Authority was not following its own policies and that work should be halted on Roe 8.

Further, it is my understanding that Save Beelias Wetlands continues to engage credible and recognised experts in furthering their understanding of issues in relation to construction activities that may affect the Beelias Wetlands. This includes experts in the areas of traffic modelling, noise modelling and environmental impacts.

The Beelias Wetlands have been under threat for many years and with the election of the Labor government in 2017 and the scrapping of Roe 8, the public were optimistic that this area would finally receive the protection it needed. This petition demonstrates public concern that the area may be at risk yet again as the Murdoch Drive Connection appears set to be stage one of Roe 8. I believe that the public's concern is warranted given that the Government is relying on the same Ministerial Approval (1008) for Murdoch Drive Connection as it did for Roe 8, despite the project being of a much different scale.

The fragility of the area was highlighted by the Environmental Protection Authority, "the EPA is of the opinion that the overall impacts of construction within the alignment, or any alignment through the Beelias Regional Park in the vicinity of North Lake and Bibra Lake, would lead to the ecological values of the area as a whole being diminished in the long-term. Every effort should be made to avoid this..."

I draw the Committee's attention to the concern raised by residents about the noise modelling methodology used by Main Roads based on a study conducted by University of Western Australia School of Physics researcher and acoustics specialist Shane Chambers. This is the same information that is being used to inform the construction of the Murdoch Drive Connection project. Indeed, in an ABC news article (3 Feb 2017), State Fremantle MLA Simone McGurk raised concern based on Mr Chambers' study and called for "an independent evaluation of all the documents on which this project is based, and then a decision about what the best plan is."

The Murdoch Structure Plan highlights the need to integrate public transport planning, "As it grows, Murdoch needs to be considered as a central business district in public transport planning terms rather than a park and ride train station." Indeed I share the concern that the Murdoch Drive Connection appears to be driven more by a need to respond to a renegotiated contract deal off the back of the Roe 8 project than to a strategic transport planning decision.

Main Roads' own modelling shows a projected 63,700 cars driving north along Murdoch Drive after construction compared to a 43,000 count without the project going ahead (2031 projections). This is a significant increase in traffic that ambulances would need to navigate through to get patients to the Emergency ward.

Community confidence in this project is low, with constant changes to plans occurring as a result of local government and community input. The City of Cockburn has publicly stated that it does not support the Murdoch Drive Connection in its current iteration. The changes in plans continue while construction continues. If only to enhance community confidence and build relationships with local government representatives, I support the further investigation and clarity into this project.

The transport sector is the fourth largest contributor to global gas emissions. We need to address this by switching our focus away from a car centric, 'build more roads' approach to one that provides a thorough and detailed plan that includes viable public transport solutions.

With these points in mind, I encourage the Committee to consider this petition and reconsider the current plan. The community that live in and around this area were subjected to considerable distress and disruption during the early stages of construction of Roe 8. The then-government pushed the project through aggressively, cutting corners and breaching environmental requirements. Hectares and hectares of Banksia Woodland (a Threatened Ecological Community) were cleared including Marri trees, and roosting sites for the threatened Red Tailed Black Cockatoo were felled. All the while community raised concerns about asbestos being uncovered during construction. The community deserves clarity and confidence. An investigation and report into this project would go some way to providing the community with the assurances it deserves.

Yours sincerely,



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