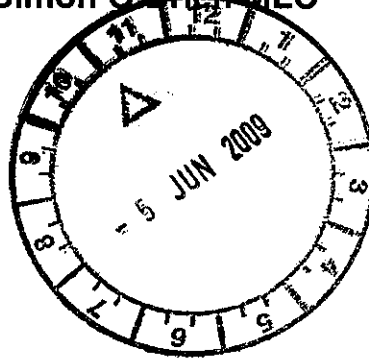




Minister for Transport; Disability Services

Hon. Simon O'Brien MLC

PUBLIC



- 3 JUN 2009

My Ref : 29-05928

Hon S Mills, MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Ms Mills

I refer to your letter of 13 May 2009 concerning Petition No 21 presented to the Committee by the Member for South West Region, Hon Sally Talbot, MLC, concerning the cost effectiveness of the Roe Highway Extension project and its impact on the Beeliar Wetlands.

The Government maintains that a sound transport policy, delivering high standards of safety, environmental performance and productivity at a sustainable cost, is fundamental to the welfare and advancement of the people and economy of Western Australia. As you may be aware, the Government made a pre-election commitment that if elected to office, funds would be provided over the next four years to begin construction of an extension of Roe Highway from Kwinana Freeway to Stock Road.

This extension of Roe Highway is an important component of the metropolitan road network in that it will form part of the key freight route to the Outer Harbour and will improve access to the Inner Harbour, including the removal of a significant number of trucks from Leach Highway (east of Stock Road) and the Kwinana Freeway. It will also reduce traffic on local roads and allow improved access to the Murdoch area. The extension will therefore have significant benefits both economically and socially.

The value of the natural environment in the vicinity of the project is recognised. A high level of innovative planning and design solutions and construction techniques, unlike that previously seen on Main Roads' projects, will be implemented on this project. These actions will be developed in full participation with the community and key stakeholders with the objective of ensuring that the environment is in better condition following the completion of the project.

Innovative techniques will be adopted to respect Aboriginal heritage sites and there will be a significant program of public art and other appropriate measures to enhance social outcomes for the project. In addition, the Committee is assured that the highest levels of community engagement will be adopted on this sensitive and very important project to ensure that sustainable outcomes will be achieved through strong collaborative relationships.

In order to further assist, I have enclosed a document addressing frequently asked questions related to the proposed project. I trust this will prove informative. The Committee's interest in this important project is appreciated.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon O'Brien', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Simon O'Brien, MLC
MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT

Enc

**ROE HIGHWAY EXTENSION
KWINANA FREEWAY – STOCK ROAD
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

What is the alignment of the Roe Highway Extension?

The indicative alignment for the Roe Highway Extension is shown on the scheme plan which is available at:

www.mainroads.wa.gov.au

In general the extension will join to the Kwinana Freeway at the location of the existing Roe Highway interchange and head west along the MRS (Metropolitan Region Scheme) road reserve to end at Stock Road in the vicinity of its current intersection with Forrest Road.

The road reserve is already in place for this section of Roe Highway. Is Main Roads locked in to the current road reserve or is there some flexibility?

The road reserve that is currently in place for Roe Highway is based on very old planning from the 1960s. This planning is out of date and does not reflect current thinking. A portion of the alignment is constrained by urban development but the section between North Lake Road and Kwinana Freeway has some flexibility. The alignment through this section will be the subject of extensive consultation with the community and stakeholders to arrive at a solution which minimises environmental impacts and fully incorporates sustainability principles. The vacant land adjacent to the road reserve is generally in government ownership so any changes outside of the reserve should be able to be readily accommodated.

What will be the standard of the new road?

The original planning for this section of Roe Highway was based on a six lane road of 100km/h freeway standard with full access Interchanges at all major cross roads. As part of Main Roads' approach to designing and constructing Roe Highway Extension, all of these aspects will be reconsidered as part of the extensive community and stakeholder engagement process that will be commencing in the near future. Without pre-empting this consultation process, it is likely that:

- The new road will consist of four lanes – two in each direction.
- Some sections may be reduced to 80km/h design speed to minimise impacts on the environment and on the community.
- Some of the interchanges will be downgraded by removing some of the previously planned on or off ramps.
- All other design standards (e.g. median widths etc) will be reconsidered.

What is the proposed layout for the new intersection that will be formed at Roe Highway / Stock Road?

This extension of Roe Highway will end at the location of the current intersection of Stock Road and Forrest Road. One of the objectives of the project will be to encourage heavy vehicles to use Stock Road rather than continuing west along Forrest Road, whilst still retaining access to the west for local traffic. It is unknown how this will be achieved at this stage, as the layout of the intersection will be developed in full consultation with the community and relevant stakeholders.

How will local roads be impacted and what connections will be provided to Roe Highway Extension?

The connections from the local road network are subject to review during the extensive community and stakeholder engagement that will commence in the near future. Some preliminary indications, working from east to west, are:

- *Kwinana Freeway:* The proposed interchange is likely to be a full freeway to freeway type connection so that free flowing access is available in all directions, however this is subject to review and lower cost options of reduced standard will be fully investigated.
- *Bibra Drive:* The original planning for a connection at Bibra Drive showed a grade separated interchange for which the on and off ramps had a major impact on the nearby Roe Swamp. This layout will be reviewed so that environmental impacts will be minimised. Options to be considered are connections to the west only or the east only, or no connection at all. There is also a possibility that this connection can serve another purpose of providing direct southern access to Fiona Stanley Hospital and other nearby developments.
- *North Lake Road:* It is a likely that a diamond type interchange will be provided at North Lake Road however this will be reviewed in consultation with the community and stakeholders.
- *Stock and Forrest Roads:* The termination of the extension is likely to be a three or four-way connection. The need for a fourth leg, which is a connection to Forrest Road west of Stock Road, depends on the access requirements further to the west. All options will be examined during the community engagement process.

Several local roads will be impacted by the Roe Highway Extension. The treatment of these impacts will be determined during traffic studies and stakeholder and community engagement. Roads likely to be impacted include:

- *Progress Drive:* Roe Highway Extension will cross Progress Drive near its current intersection with Hope Road. Options may include cul-de-sacs on Progress Drive either side of Roe Highway or an underpass.
- *Hope Road:* As a minimum Hope Road is likely to be impacted by Roe Highway Extension near its current intersection with Progress Drive. Further impacts will be identified during selection of the final road alignment.
- *Coolbellup Avenue and Sudlow Road:* It is likely that there will be a bridge over Roe Highway Extension linking Coolbellup Avenue and Sudlow Road. However, this is subject to review.
- *Forrest Road:* The Roe Highway Extension road reserve includes the current Forrest Road from near its intersection with Sudlow Road west to Stock Road. Forrest Road from Sudlow Road east to North Lake Road is unlikely to be impacted by Roe Highway. Connections from this section of Forrest Road to other local roads will be subject to review.

How will traffic patterns in the area be affected?

The extension of Roe Highway to Stock Road will see most local roads in the area carrying less traffic.

Possible changes when Roe Highway Extension is constructed, based on preliminary traffic modelling for 2016, are shown below. Note that the predicted changes are indicative only and will change as the scope of the Roe Highway Extension and any related changes to local roads are developed during an extensive community engagement phase which will commence in the near future.

- Leach Highway east of Stock Road, trucks over 12.5 metres long (such as semi-trailers, B-doubles and long vehicles) will be prohibited;
- South Street east of North Lake Road, 26% less traffic;
- Farrington Road west of Bibra Drive, 64% less traffic;
- Phoenix Road west of North Lake Road, 16% less traffic;
- Phoenix Road west of Stock Road, 44% more traffic;
- Winterfold Road west of Stock Road, 2% more traffic;
- Berrigan Drive west of Kwinana Freeway, 21% less traffic;
- Beelara Road east of Spearwood Avenue, 21% less traffic;
- Kwinana Freeway south of Roe Highway, 20% less traffic;
- North Lake Road south of Forrest Road, 39% less traffic; and
- Stock Road south of Roe Highway, 56% more traffic.

How will trucks over 12.5 metres long (such as semi-trailers, B-doubles and long vehicles) travel to Fremantle once this new section is built?

- Trucks heading to Fremantle on the current Roe Highway will continue across Kwinana Freeway, travelling west on the new extension until its end point at Stock Road. From there vehicles will travel north along Stock Road and then turn left at Leach Highway and use Leach Highway / High Street to access Fremantle as is currently the case.

As a result, a significant number of trucks will be removed from the Kwinana Freeway (between Roe Highway and Leach Highway) and Leach Highway (between Kwinana Freeway and Stock Road).

What are the benefits in building this extension of Roe Highway?

The Government maintains that a sound transport policy, delivering high standards of safety, environmental performance and productivity at a sustainable cost, is fundamental to the welfare and advancement of the people and economy of Western Australia.

The extension of Roe Highway from Kwinana Freeway to Stock Road will:

- - Complete the key strategic link in Perth's road network which connects Reid Highway, Great Northern Highway and Great Eastern Highway in the Midland area to Tonkin Highway, Kwinana Freeway and Stock Road.
 - Provide improved access to the Fremantle Inner Harbour.
 - Form part of the key freight route to the proposed Outer Harbour and the expanding Kwinana industrial area.
 - Remove trucks from the residential areas along Leach Highway between Stock Road and Kwinana Freeway, which will improve safety, reduce noise and improve the general amenity in this area.
 - Remove trucks from Kwinana Freeway, which is primarily a light vehicle road, between Leach Highway and Roe Highway improving safety and reducing congestion.
 - Improve safety and reduce congestion on the east-west roads in the Murdoch area such as South Street and Farrington Road, and other local roads.
 - Allow for improved access to the future Fiona Stanley Hospital and other developments in the Murdoch area.
 - Provide better access for residents in the City of Cockburn who are travelling to the east and better access from the east to the rapidly expanding Cockburn coast area.

The 2003 Freight Network Study reported that Roe Highway Stage 8 was not required and that freight could travel to the coast using the existing road network. What has changed since then?

The Government maintains that a sound transport policy, delivering high standards of safety, environmental performance and productivity at a sustainable cost, is fundamental to the welfare and advancement of the people and economy of Western Australia. Currently freight travels to Fremantle via the Kwinana Freeway and Leach Highway leading to congestion, an unsafe mix of heavy and light vehicles and in the case of Leach Highway, noise and other pollution on a primarily residential road. The extension of Roe Highway to Stock Road will provide a high standard link to both the inner and proposed outer harbours with improved social, environmental and economic outcomes when compared to the current situation.

Why can't the Roe Highway Extension follow the existing freight railway line between Kwinana Freeway and Stock Road to the south of Bibra Lake?

Studies have identified that this route will result in an inferior standard road and severe social disturbance with substantial resumption of homes required. It is therefore not considered to be a viable option.

What is the Government's position on building the remainder of Roe Highway Stage 8 and Fremantle Eastern Bypass?

Advice from the Department for Planning & Infrastructure (DPI) indicates that from a transport planning perspective, constructing Fremantle Eastern Bypass (FEB) and a further extension of Roe Highway through to Cockburn Road would improve traffic and road safety conditions for freight and general transport in the south west metropolitan corridor.

The previous government however, oversaw the removal of the FEB from the Metropolitan Region Scheme in 2004. Disposal of the land to private ownership is now well advanced and some development is already occurring within the former FEB reservation. As a result of this redevelopment it is highly unlikely that the FEB project could be reinstated.

In relation to a further extension of Roe Highway from Stock Road to Cockburn Road, the DPI will undertake a planning review to determine the appropriate road network west of the planned Roe Highway / Stock Road intersection. This study is expected to commence in April and finish later in 2009.

The current MRS road reserve appears to be quite large. Will this amount of land be required for the road?

The current road reserve was determined using very old planning from the 1960's. This planning is out of date and does not reflect current thinking. The final road alignment and footprint will be the subject of extensive consultation with the community and stakeholders to arrive at a solution which minimises the actual land required for the road.

If the final alignment is outside the existing reserve or the road footprint is less than the current reserve what will happen to any surplus land?

The MRS will be amended to reflect the final road alignment and footprint. It is likely that surplus land from the existing road reserve between Bibra Drive and Progress Drive will become public open space forming part of the Beeliam Regional Park.

The 2003 EPA bulletin concluded that it would be extremely difficult to make this project environmentally acceptable. What has changed since that time?

The 2003 EPA bulletin was based on out-dated planning for Stage 8 of Roe Highway, which allowed for a high speed road of freeway standard with full interchanges at all major cross roads and very little consideration of the environmental impacts.

The current thinking for this section of Roe Highway is based on a new philosophy, which will minimise the impact of the road on the natural environment and fully incorporate sustainability principles. In this regard, all options for the new road will be considered including reducing the standard, moving the alignment, changing the layout at interchanges and adopting innovative measures to appropriately manage environmental issues.

How will the environmental impacts be managed, particularly on the wetlands and fauna?

The value of the natural environment in the vicinity of the project, particularly in the Beeljar Regional Park, is recognised. Accordingly a high level of innovative planning and design solutions and construction techniques, unlike that previously seen on Main Roads' projects, will be implemented on this project. The highest levels of community engagement will be adopted on this sensitive and very important project to ensure that sustainable outcomes will be achieved through strong collaborative relationships.

The project will therefore be the subject of extensive consultation with the community and stakeholders including local residents, community groups, conservation groups, Local Government Authorities, the Conservation Commission, the Department of Environment and Conservation and the wider community. This consultation will result in a solution which minimises environmental impacts, in particular on the wetlands and fauna, with the objective of ensuring that the environment in the Beeljar Regional Park is in better condition following completion of the project. Improvements to the existing environment could include:

- Reduced noise and emissions pollution on local roads;
- Improved management of drainage run off from local roads into Bibra and North Lakes;
- Rehabilitation and revegetation of degraded areas in Beeljar Regional Park;
- Improved interpretive, pedestrian, cyclist and recreation facilities; and
- Improved connectivity between Bibra and North Lakes (Hope Road currently forms a barrier).

The new road will create a barrier between North and Bibra Lakes. Won't this restrict fauna movement and current recreational use in the area?

The current thinking for this section of Roe Highway is based on a new philosophy, which will minimise the impact of the road on the natural environment. The philosophy recognises the critical importance of maintaining connectivity between North and Bibra Lakes. The type and extent of this connectivity will be determined during extensive consultation with the community and stakeholders.

There are some sites of significance to Aboriginal people in the project area. How will the impacts on these sites be handled?

Traditional landowners will be consulted on the best ways to eliminate or minimise impacts on Aboriginal heritage. Innovative techniques will be adopted to avoid Aboriginal heritage sites, however if the final alignment of the road requires that disturbance of heritage sites is unavoidable, the project will be submitted to the Aboriginal Cultural Material Committee and Minister for Indigenous Affairs for assessment under the Aboriginal Heritage Act.

Will local residents be affected by increased noise as a result of trucks using this new route?

Roe Highway Extension will be designed and constructed, in consultation with stakeholders and the community, to minimise noise impacts on local residents such that nationally recognised standards and any specific Environmental Protection Authority noise control conditions are met or exceeded.

When will construction start and how much will it cost?

The State Government's commitment is to begin construction of the Roe Highway Extension by 2012. Main Roads is currently undertaking all planning activities in accordance with a schedule that will satisfy that commitment, subject to the obtaining of environmental and other approvals, and the confirmation of funding. Estimated project costs will be identified during scope development over the next two years.

How can local residents and stakeholders get involved in the project?

A Roe Highway Extension project development team, comprising Main Roads and consultant personnel, is currently being developed and will commence detailed work on the project in mid 2009. One of the team's primary initial tasks will be to develop a detailed stakeholder and community engagement strategy for immediate implementation. Communication of key development team personnel contacts details and project activities to stakeholders and the community will be a key deliverable of the strategy. If you require information on the project now go to www.mainroads.wa.gov.au for Main Roads' Roe Highway Extension project team contact details.