



Minister for Transport



Our Ref : 53-10124

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

Dear Mr O'Brien

I refer to your letter of 17 September 2015 seeking comment regarding petition No 95 – Roe Highway Extension, submitted by Ms Christine Cooper, President, Bibra Lake Residents Association.

The State Government is charged with the responsibility of ensuring Western Australia has the necessary transport infrastructure in place to meet current and future community needs.

Roe 8 is a fully funded strategic road project that will help transform the road network in Perth's southern suburbs. While this project is needed to improve freight access to Fremantle's Inner Harbour, Roe 8 will also serve the existing Kwinana Industrial Area and planned Outer Harbour into the future. The construction of Roe 8 and Section Two of Perth Freight Link will provide benefits to all motorists.

Road safety will be significantly improved, transport costs for heavy vehicle operators will be reduced and freight efficiency and productivity enhanced as a result of vital improvements for freight access between Fremantle and the key inland industrial and commercial centres.

Together with the \$1 billion Gateway WA project and the \$1.12 billion Northlink WA project, Roe 8 and The Fremantle Link (Section 2) form a vital connection in the \$3.7 billion total Federal and State investment to provide a high standard 85 kilometre freight route from Muchea to Fremantle Port.

I would like to now take the opportunity to address the specific concerns raised in Petition No 95:

Project Impacts

Roe 8 will be constructed to a four lane dual carriageway standard from Kwinana Freeway to Stock Road in Coolbellup, and will include bridged overpasses / interchanges at Murdoch Drive, Bibra Drive, Progress Drive, North Lake Road and Coolbellup Avenue. The bridged overpasses will improve safety around the Blue Gum Montessori School by assisting to remove freight and vehicles from local roads.

To mitigate the impacts on local residents, the Blue Gum Montessori School and other amenities nearby, Main Roads will continue to consult with the community over the installation of noise walls which will reduce traffic noise and visual impacts.

In regards to the air quality around the Roe 8 project area, an air quality assessment was conducted using an internationally accepted air dispersion model that considered construction impacts and heavy vehicle use on Roe 8 up until 2031. The model predicted that heavy vehicle exhaust emissions, would be well below background levels already present in the local atmosphere and below the National Environmental Protection Measure (NEPM) ambient air quality criteria.

Access

Main Roads acknowledges that Roe 8 may require some members of the community to adjust their current driving habits and there may be some short-term inconvenience. However, in the long-term, it is anticipated that Roe 8 will also take some light vehicle traffic off the local roads as traffic flows adjust, thereby easing congestion for local journeys.

Environment

The value and importance of the natural environment in the vicinity of the Roe Highway extension is recognised. The preferred concept design was informed by comprehensive environmental studies and an award winning public participation program carried out between 2009 – 2011. The program included nine workshops and public forums and three structured online forums where the public helped to shape the preferred route.

The preferred concept design for Roe 8 exceeds current practice for environmentally sensitive construction and is required to meet strict environmental conditions and regulations determined by the Environmental Protection Authority.

Examples of this include:

- Utilising land already partially cleared for overhead power lines;
- Building two bridges through the wetlands – a 120 metre long bridge over Roe Swamp and a 70 metre bridge over Horse Paddock Swamp;
- Implementing a Wetland Restoration Program at North Lake and Horse Paddock Swamp;
- Where possible, re-vegetation works will use local native species and seed collected during the Flora Condition Survey;
- Using a top-down construction approach at Roe Swamp Bridge to minimise clearing footprint and compaction during construction;

- Construction of fauna underpasses through the alignment to maintain fauna connectivity;
- Development of a series of plans to manage and monitor fauna and flora, wetland health and water drainage; and
- Proposed purchasing of more than 400 hectares of native vegetation as an environmental offset to the 97.8 hectares of native vegetation that will be impacted.

Heritage

The location of the WW2 Australian Women's Army Service site is well outside of the Metropolitan Regional Scheme boundary and will not be impacted by the proposed Project works. The site is also not currently on any Municipal, State or Federal Heritage List.

In regards to Aboriginal heritage listed sites, Main Roads recognises there will be some disruption at a Heritage Listed Site on the northern banks of Bibra Lake. A significant number of artefacts were recovered from this site in the 1970's. Due to a high level of disturbance in the area, a more recent Main Roads Heritage Survey found a low number of surface artefacts. However, the report did state that there is potential for further artefacts to be found in the sub-surface.

Although work at the site in question will be largely 'in fill' i.e. raising the level of the land rather than excavating, Main Roads will require the construction contractor to engage Aboriginal 'monitors' to be present during excavation work in any area that has the potential to contain buried material. This is in addition to meeting Section 18 of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 consent conditions set by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs permitting Main Roads to disturb the site.

Outer Harbour

The Government recognises the Outer Harbour in Kwinana as the preferred location for future container handling facilities when the Inner Harbour reaches its practical capacity. Container facilities in both the Inner and Outer Harbours will be required to service the growing needs of the State and Roe 8 will provide an efficient road transport link to service both of these Harbours well into the future.

Regardless of government investment, the timing of the Outer Harbour is market-driven and will ultimately depend on the economic viability of the port development. A lead time of 10 years is required to plan and deliver a new container and general cargo port in Kwinana.

Leach Highway

Leach Highway and High Street were never designed to be a dedicated freight route to the Port of Fremantle; this route is simply not sustainable to accommodate demands on the Inner Harbour; nor will they be required to facilitate freight access to a future Outer Harbour.

For Leach Highway east of the Kwinana Freeway, container trucks are restricted in recognition of the negative impacts on the community. Container trucks are also restricted on Canning Highway and South Street for the same reasons.

The construction of the Perth Freight Link is considered essential and the funding commitment from both the Federal Government and the State Government of Western Australia is required to complete the metropolitan ring road system of National importance, which will ultimately service both the Port of Fremantle and the future Outer Harbour in Cockburn Sound.

I trust the information provided has clarified this matter for you. The Committee's ongoing interest in this project is certainly appreciated.

Yours sincerely



**HON DEAN NALDER MLA
MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT**

05 NOV 2015