

Ref: Petition no 30

Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs  
Hon Simon O'Brien MLC  
Parliament House  
Perth, Western Australia, 6000

24 March 2014

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for your letter dated, 26 February 2014. I appreciate the opportunity to provide further detail regarding my petition "the Great Eastern Highway section between The Lakes Roadhouse Beechina and Northam Bypass".

As you would be aware for many years now this section of road has been the location of numerous horrific major vehicle accidents. This particularly came to my attention in April 2013 when an immediate family member was involved in a major critical car accident involving a truck. Within the following six week period numerous other car accidents took place in this location.

This part of the Highway is generally single lane, carrying both cars and trucks along a major East/West artery. The majority of these trucks are heavy laden and many tow several trailers. The general conditions and construction of this road makes it absolutely impossible for cars, of any size to travel in safety. There is nowhere to safely pass a truck or to pull off in cases of emergency. This is the case my relative faced. They needed a safe pull off zone but instead came face to face with a truck closely followed by a Western Power power pole. If there had been a dual lane, the truck would have been able to avoid the collision and the result for my family would have been very, very different.

You would also be aware that Great Eastern Highway is the major route many country people from the Northern and Southern Wheatbelt use to travel backward and forward to Perth CBD. The only other route available to Northern Wheatbelt residents is Toodyay Road (Redhill) which offers an even more dangerous alternative.

The following is an extract of Main Roads Western Australia's regional profile for the Wheatbelt North (accessed 13 May 2011): "The Wheatbelt North region covers an area approximately 100,134km<sup>2</sup> (3.9% of the State). The region's population was estimated as being 52,100 in 2007" and "The Wheatbelt South region covers an area approximately 55,400km<sup>2</sup> (2% of the State). The region's population was estimated as being 25,500 in 2001".

Many of our Wheatbelt Elderly community who travel to Perth for medical treatment due to the lack of provision in the Wheatbelt. It is also the major route many of our parents travel to deliver children to school as well as forming part of numerous school bus routes. Apart from there being no safer alternative road route, there is also limited public transport available to assist.

I am sure on further investigation your Committee will agree that ALL vehicles travelling along this major route are placed in danger due to the inadequate nature of the road, its narrowness, winding

path, lack of lighting, lack of pull off zones, volume and speed of traffic making this an extremely dangerous area of road.

The following is information from the Office of Road Safety: "145 people were killed or seriously injured in the Wheatbelt North region last year. 1,466 people have been killed or seriously injured in the last 10 years (2003-2012) in the Wheatbelt North region. Taking into account the population, this equates to a high KSI rate of 297.2 per 100,000 population" and "67 people were killed or seriously injured in the Wheatbelt South region last year. 730 people have been killed or seriously injured in the last 10 years (2003-2012) in the Wheatbelt South region. Taking into account the population, this equates to a KSI rate of 314.1 per 100,000 population. This is the highest rate in Western Australia".

The Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development have the following on their website: "The annual economic cost of road crashes in Australia is enormous—estimated at \$27 billion per annum—and the social impacts are devastating.

Since record keeping commenced in 1925, there have been over 180,000 deaths on Australia's roads...the number of road deaths per year has fallen from 3,798 deaths in 1970 to 1,193 in 2013.

The Australian Government is responsible for regulating safety standards for new vehicles, and for allocating infrastructure resources, including for safety, across the national highway and local road networks.

State and territory governments are responsible for funding, planning, designing and operating the road network; managing vehicle registration and driver licensing systems; and regulating and enforcing road user behaviour."

As you would be aware this National Road Safety Strategy 2011–2020 "is firmly based on Safe System principles and is framed by the guiding vision that no person should be killed or seriously injured on Australia's roads". Neither Federal or State Governments are addressing the Strategic Plan very well as you can see from the statistics referred to.

On investigating this issue myself I have been shocked to view the 'Serious Crashes by Nature 2008-2012' map detailing ALL road crashes in the Northern Wheatbelt region. But of particular surprise is the immediate area of road outlined in my petition. I anticipate that you will find it just a shocking and support my petition and ADDRESS THE SAFETY CONCERNS for the 52,000 residents who potentially use Great Eastern Highway.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you in anticipation of your assistance with this matter.

Kind Regards,

*Samantha Mudgebury*