

Submission to the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs

Ref: Petition No 95 – Roe Highway Extension

From: Christine Cooper, President, Bibra Lake Residents Association Inc



Dear Committee Members

The following submission is written on behalf of the Bibra Lake Residents Association Inc, the Coolbellup Community Association Inc and North Lake residents. It addresses our concerns and fears about the impact of the Roe 8/Perth Freight Link on the environment that we and neighbouring residents live in, as well as the Beeliar Regional Park. It also contains significant heritage issues.

The plans for Roe 8 from the Department of Main Roads clearly shows that this 6 lane highway will be located very close to existing homes in Bibra Lake, North Lake and Coolbellup. It will run directly beside the fence of the Blue Gum Montessori School located at 11 Hope Rd, Bibra Lake. The traffic noise 24hours per day, constant light during the night and air pollution from the traffic, particularly the estimated 5000 trucks per day will severely impact on the local residents and primary school children. Many formal studies have been done on air pollution from traffic, in particular diesel fumes, which show increased health risks, including asthma, heart conditions and lung cancer. Building this highway through our suburbs is knowingly putting our residents' health at risk. We understand the desire to move trucks off Leach Hwy, but do not understand how moving them from one community to another solves the problem, unless the Leach Hwy residents are more highly valued by the current WA government than the residents who live close to the proposed Roe 8.

The permanent closure of Hope Rd, Counsel Rd (Stock Rd intersection) and the section of Forrest Rd that connects with Stock Rd will increase traffic congestion in the surrounding suburbs. The closure of Hope Rd will result in Bibra Drive being the only exit and entrance road for the east side of Bibra Lake. In particular this will cause major congestion problems at peak hours for residents' children attending high school in Leeming (there is no high school in Bibra Lake), access to Freeway, shops, hospitals, and other suburbs. Coolbellup residents will have limited entrance & exit to their suburb with the closure of Forrest Rd from Coolbellup Rd to Stock Rd and Counsel Rd also causing congestion problems. These permanent road closures will also affect Bibra Lake & North Lake residents and make travelling in these suburbs more difficult. Finance Minister, Mathias Cormann has stated (30th Aug 2015) that "reducing congestion on local arterial roads and delivering a safer driving network for both our truck drivers and those living in our southern suburbs" will be the outcome for the Perth Freight Link. This will definitely not be the case for residents in suburbs affected by the new Roe 8 highway, as congestion will be a real and permanent issue.

The construction of the Roe 8 section will severely impact on the natural environment of the Beeliar Regional Park at North Lake. Our community believes in the importance of retaining the wetland area for the wildlife and vegetation. It is home to more than 220 plant species and 123 bird species including the endangered Carnaby's Cockatoo and peregrine falcon. Other animals include bandicoots, bats, possums, dozens of reptiles and amphibians, including 9 species of frogs. Most of the wetlands in the Perth region have been destroyed by the development and expansion of suburbs and roads, so that it is important to value and preserve this area as part of our geographical history as well as continuing to provide the natural home for these species. It is totally unreasonable to believe that the allocation of 400ha of land in another part of the state can provide a new home

for them. Our local wetland is an area extremely valuable for education, science and community recreation as well as preservation of habitat.

The recent discovery of the WW2, AWAS (Australian Women's Army Service) site at Bibra Lake also shows that the construction of this highway will impact on a newly Heritage listed site as it is located in the pathway of the Roe 8. This site is not only valuable to the local residents, but also a unique historical site for WA and Australia. This discovery has been verified by an independent historical consultant as part of the Heritage listing process initiated by the City of Cockburn, and by archaeologist, Sue Carter (evidence can be supplied on request). Discoveries at the site continue to be made which prove that this Regimental Headquarters WW2 site covered the area into the Roe 8 zone. We are currently awaiting the delivery of a copy of the 761page WW2 diary of the site (1941 – 1944) which has been located at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. City of Cockburn and the RSL support the Heritage listing and preservation of this site. City of Cockburn has also submitted an Emergency National Heritage Listing application.

The area between North Lake and Bibra Lake is also a significant heritage listed Aboriginal site. Numerous Aboriginal campsites have been documented adjacent to the lake. Findings in the area suggest that the Beeliar group of Aboriginal people had been camping around Bibra Lake & North Lake for at least 5000 years (Polglaze, 1986). We find the interest that Prime Minister, Tony Abbot, is currently showing in Aboriginal people and their heritage in the whole of Australia is particularly fascinating, when our current WA Government is determined to ignore the significant Heritage listed area for our local Aboriginal people by bulldozing and destroying the site.

We support the proposal to develop the Outer Harbour at Kwinana and the road connections proposed in the Latitude 32 plan as developed by our Cockburn City Council. We believe that the intended spending of our tax payers' money by both the Federal and State Governments on the Roe 8/Perth Freight Link project is misappropriation of our taxes for a politically driven project. The study by Professor Peter Newman & Cole Hendrigan from Curtin University states that "the findings demonstrate the real need is to create good road and rail connections to a new container port in the Fremantle Outer Harbour". As this will be required by WA in the near future, it would be sensible for the current government to be directing the funding to the Outer Harbour project, or other urgent road improvements, rather than spending our money on an extraordinarily expensive road that has not been properly or completely planned and has disregarded the impact on our community.

We recognise that there is a traffic issue for Fremantle and Leach Hwy but improvements to Leach Hwy would incur minor costs in comparison to the costs of the Perth Freight Link. The potential savings could be invested in the Outer Harbour Project, providing short and long term solutions. We do not understand or agree with the refusal of the State Government to release the business case and traffic modelling for the Perth Freight Link and believe that the whole decision to proceed with the Roe 8/Perth Freight Link should be immediately reversed.

On behalf of the Bibra Lake Residents Association Inc, Coolbellup Community Association Inc and North Lake residents, I am prepared to explain, elaborate and provide evidence of the statements made in this submission, before the Committee if required. This complaint has not been taken to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations.

Regards

Christine Cooper