

Hon. Matthew Swinbourn MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Legislative Council Committee Office
Parliament House
4 Harvest Terrace
WEST PERTH WA 6005

via email: env@parliament.wa.gov.au

Dear Chair

Petition No. 167 – Tonkin Gap Project

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Standing Committee in relation to the Petition on the Tonkin Gap Project (Project) which was tabled by Hon Tim Clifford MLC in the Legislative Council on 24 September 2020.

Main Roads Western Australia (Main Roads) have advised that the Project includes no provision for noise walls for the Redcliffe Bridge (Bridge) or Claughton Reserve (Reserve). The local community are very concerned with the noise generated by vehicles on the Bridge which has grown significantly in recent years. Currently, the Bridge is used by more than 120,000 vehicles daily and is projected to grow to 210,000 vehicles daily when the Project is complete.

A petition of more than 300 signatures was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 24 September 2020 by Hon Dave Kelly MLA. The signatures were gathered from users of the Reserve and local residents east of the Bridge and north of the Swan River. Both petitions call for the construction of a noise wall adjacent to the Reserve and across the Bridge to effectively mitigate noise from Tonkin Highway. This request is consistent with the WA Government strategy for post-COVID economic recovery through investment in major infrastructure.

The Project will see the Bridge become one of Australia's largest bridges, carrying a significant proportion of heavy freight vehicles. The Bridge will be on the same scale as the West Gate Bridge, Victoria (see Figure 1) and the Sir Leo Hielscher Bridge, Queensland (see Figure 2), which both have noise walls.



Figure 1. West Gate Bridge with noise wall (10 lanes)



Figure 2. Sir Leo Hielscher Bridge with noise wall (12 lanes)

Main Roads have constructed noise walls on bridges in other places relating to the Tonkin Highway upgrade. Figure 3 shows bridges with noise walls in Morley¹ (6 lanes) and Beechboro² (4 lanes), Western Australia. A noise wall is also planned for the Dunstone Road bridge.

¹ Morley Drive and Tonkin Highway intersection

² Beechboro Road North and Reid Highway intersection

Figure 3. Noise walls on other sections of Tonkin Highway Upgrade



There are unique factors that warrant the inclusion of a noise wall on the Bridge and for the Reserve. The Bridge is surrounded by residential dwellings that are in very close proximity (within meters) of Tonkin Highway. These residential dwellings are not adequate to protect residents from the level of noise pollution (current or projected) generated by the Highway. The Reserve is frequented by numerous people each day from many locations to enjoy the amenity of the Reserve. The City of Bayswater has invested significantly in the restoration and preservation of the Reserve over the past 10-15 years to make this Reserve a place people visit for recreation. The impact of the noise is a serious environmental and social issue.

Would the Standing Committee consider obtaining a response to the questions below in relation to the Project please?

1. We understand the new Bridge is being designed to structurally support a noise wall, yet there is no funding to install a noise wall on the new Bridge. Why? The additional cost of a noise wall on the new Bridge is projected to cost less than 0.5% of the total Project.
2. What is the Project timetable? What is the latest time that changes to the Project design may be made to include the noise walls?
3. What are the results of the noise monitoring undertaken by Main Roads in relation to the Reserve and Bridge?
4. What is the forecast impact of noise on the Reserve, and residential properties adjacent to the Bridge and adjacent to the Reserve?
5. Why has Main Roads constructed noise walls on bridges in other places related to Tonkin Highway upgrade, but not on the Project's Bridge?
6. Why has Main Roads limited the funding of the Project to the building of noise walls adjacent to residential properties, and not across the Bridge or adjacent to the Reserve?
7. Does Main Roads and Hon Rita Saffioti support the request to construct a noise wall across the Bridge and adjacent to the Reserve?
8. Friends of Claughton Reserve wrote to Hon Rita Saffioti MLA on 27 July 2020 in relation to this issue, no response has been received. Can the Standing Committee facilitate our meeting with the Minister?
9. Can the Standing Committee facilitate our meeting with individuals from Main Roads accountable for the Project?

This submission is made on behalf of the Friends of Claughton Reserve, which is a community-interest group that works to support environmental conservation, restoration and preservation, and social amenity of the Reserve for the community. Two other community groups have formed organically through shared concern, residents local to Gobba Lake and the Tonkin Gap Project Community Group. These three community groups combined represent approximately 1,500 local community members.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Mack