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To Whom It May Concern:

Submission on TOR of the Western Brisbane Transport Network Investigation

Submitted by: Dr Bruce Flegg MP, Member for Moggill

As the state member for the Brisbane Electorate of Moggill (geographically Brisbane's largest electorate) I make the following submission.

The draft terms of reference contain 11 points some of which I will refer to as general directions and some of which are specific directions. The general directions are little more than an instruction to "have a look at traffic and transport" in the Western Suburbs. They give little guidance as to what is expected of the contractor or what our community may expect to be examined.

ON THE SPECIFIC DIRECTIONS

Examine the role of existing transport corridors

Existing transport corridors include the portion of the Moggill pocket sub arterial, locally known as the "Kenmore bypass". This is currently the subject of a preliminary investigation separate to the WBTNI. The balance of the Moggill pocket sub arterial corridor through Moggill and Pullenvale would be examined under this direction. Whilst examination of the use of existing corridors is expected, the latter road is in effect simply a duplication of Moggill Road from the Brisbane River at Moggill Pocket through to Pinjarra Hills. It is widely accepted locally and is also strongly my own view that a simple duplication of this section of Moggill Road on its own offers nothing whatsoever in terms of local traffic benefit.

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The principle problems associated with Moggill Road relate to the bottleneck through Kenmore and proximal towards the city of Brisbane.

Trans Apex – Northern Link proposal from Toowong cemetery

Possibly the most critical commuter transport issue in the western suburbs is the inadequacy of the Western Freeway at the Toowong end.

This proposal, as you are aware, to tunnel from the Toowong Cemetery to the Inner City Bypass (ICB) is at an advanced stage of preparation. There have been no other proposals put forward that I am aware of to address this intractable transport failing.

This aspect of the WBTNI is strongly supported.

Point 6 refers to the investigation of a need for a western bypass of Brisbane

There is a subtle but nevertheless definite change in rhetoric from the South East Queensland regional plan which referred to a “western bypass through Brisbane” not a bypass of Brisbane.

I have laboured the difference long and hard and clearly these are two very different proposals aimed at differing objectives. I urge you in the final terms of reference, and in this study, to be very clear about the proposal and what its objectives are.

Western Brisbane Bypass: to be or not to be

Points 7 and 9 specifically contradict each other. Point 7 that no route has been chosen appears to have been added to diminish community anxiety. Point 9 contradicts Point 7 by specifically choosing two routes for investigation. One option being a road to the west of Mt Coot-tha apparently through Brookfield and the Gap. This option appears consistent with the indicative line that was originally placed in the South East Queensland Plan and infrastructure plan.

The second being the far western bypass option through the Brisbane Valley. I have campaigned hard for this option to be considered. I am pleased to see that this option finally rates a mention in this long running discussion. Clearly without the inclusion of the

Brisbane Valley option the one through Brookfield, Brisbane Forrest Park and The Gap would have been the only option still on the table.

Western Brisbane Bypass – a new road corridor

I think it is very important to define what the consultant is being asked to look at. There is a fundamental difference between proposing a road in an area where a road corridor exists or a new corridor in an area that is yet to be subjected to residential development and this proposal to build a new road corridor through a developed residential area.

In the case of an existing road corridor home owners should be aware of the possibility of a road construction. They have been protected by the standard practice of Main Roads Department searches. The presence of the potential road is therefore factored in, to a greater or lesser extent, to property prices and the decisions that people make.

The imposition of a new road corridor through a residential area is a whole different ball game. The proposed Koala Road through residential and environmentally sensitive areas and the former Route 20 are excellent examples of the fundamental problem of putting a new road corridor through an already established residential area without any warning.

In this case, we are talking about one of the longest newly proposed corridors ever to be considered in Brisbane. This is a ribbon corridor through tens of kilometres of both residential and environmentally sensitive area. The potential impact will affect tens of thousands of residents. None of these residents would have been aware when choosing where to live that they may be subjected to a major highway.

This will invariably cause enormous anguish and financial loss to a great number of residents. Thousands of residents along the potential road west of Mt Coot-tha have elected to live in areas such as Pullenvale, Brookfield, The Gap or Samford because of lifestyle factors. They have generally tolerated difficult transport conditions because of the lifestyle they have chosen for themselves and their families.

My strong view is that a road corridor of this magnitude through already established residential areas and which is highly likely to negatively impact on environmentally sensitive preserved areas such as Brisbane Forest Park, ought not be considered.

The failure to have reserved a road corridor in previous decades and the rapidly increasing residential population of these areas reflects the fact that the opportunity of constructing a highway of this magnitude though this area has now been lost.

I believe that it would inevitably be defeated by angry community backlash. That backlash has strong justification in the fact that peoples lifestyle choices and property purchases have been made on the basis that no road corridor exists. They have a right to expect that if a road is to be considered through this area the corridor ought to have been reserved many years ago before large residential populations moved into the area.

The Brisbane Valley option appears to be more consistent with basic commonsense in that we are in effect planning for the future with a road corridor though an area that is in part undeveloped and in part contains an existing road corridor.

Any consideration of a WBB is clearly going to be a long term project. I consider that **roads create their own demand**. The construction of a major highway will tend to dictate the pattern of development rather than the other way around.

The forward thinking construction of the Gateway Arterial clearly demonstrates this point.

From the specific aspects of your terms of reference it is apparent that this study is in fact designed to look at two major functions. They are a possible Western Brisbane Bypass and possible support for northern link.

Lack of detail and specifics for other transport needs in Brisbane's west

I am concerned that the terms of reference, while specific about two projects have almost no guidance for the consultant in relation to the other transport needs of the western suburbs.

I would encourage some additional specific terms of reference to be added.

- a. We have an absurd situation at Indooroopilly where there is effectively no interchange at the Indooroopilly station. The bus station is a significant distance away up a hill along Station Road making commuters quite disinclined to use this as a bus/rail interchange.
- b. There is little or no park and ride or drop off facility at Indooroopilly.
- c. The failure of connectivity at the major rail interchange for Brisbane's west is hugely to the detriment of the transport needs of the western suburbs. The connectivity of transport, in particular bus, rail and automobile, in the Indooroopilly area ought to be included as a specific item

Western Freeway

It is extraordinary that the biggest transport problem in the western suburbs, the Western Freeway, does not merit specific instruction in the terms of reference. The critical transport bottleneck of the Western Freeway should be mentioned in its own right in addition to consideration of northern link. In particular the expansion of the Western Freeway to incorporate a public transport lane ought to be a specific item in the terms of reference.

Light Rail and other innovative solutions

Given the failure over many decades to put effective transport networks into the western suburbs it is timely that solutions such as light rail should at least be part of the considered response. I would specifically request that light rail connecting the western suburbs to the inner west be considered as a specific item in the terms of reference.

Conclusion

A general review of the transport needs of the western suburbs is supported.

I strongly believe that a new highway through residential areas, in particularly through Pullenvale, Brookfield, Samford and The Gap, as well as environmentally sensitive areas such as Brisbane Forrest Park ought not to be considered and should be removed from the terms of reference.

If a major road corridor of this type were ever to have been considered it ought to have been done decades ago before people made their residential choices and in my view it is unfair to those communities to belatedly consider a proposal of this magnitude.

I do not believe this is a case of NIMBY but rather a response that any community in South East Queensland would make to a proposal of this magnitude through an area that has already become heavily residential.

I support the specific recommendations in relation to the Brisbane Valley and northern link.

A whole raft of serious transport problems in the western suburbs are not specifically addressed in the terms of reference. This study, if it proceeds under these terms of reference is inadequate and focuses on two particular outcomes but ignores some very obvious and in some cases less expensive outcomes.

The poor standard of transport connectivity at Indooroopilly should be specifically addressed in the terms of reference.

Other areas I would specifically suggest be included would be cycleway connectivity at Sylvan Road, a cycle way along Moggill Road and Mt Crosby Road, and the bottleneck at Toowong station passing from High Street to Coronation Drive.

The dreadful congestion on the Western Freeway ought to be specifically dealt with as a point in the terms of reference aside from and in addition to northern link.

Some innovative public transport options in particular a light rail alternative ought to be at least examined.

No mention is made in the terms of reference of the current Kenmore bypass study. I believe this should be at least mentioned specifically in the terms of reference and the relationship between the two studies clarified for the benefit of local residents.