



Brisbane City Council

Councillor David Hinchliffe

Deputy Mayor and Majority Leader
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Mr Barry Wilson
Rivermouth Action Group
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Dear Barry

I refer to your letter to me regarding the North South Bypass Tunnel.

Thank you for sharing your further views of the North South Bypass Tunnel (NSBT) directly with me. I will answer each of your points in the order you made them to me.

“Air Quality and Public Health Implications”

I understand that to date, public feedback on the NSBT has indicated a desire for higher ventilation structures related to the project. Options for higher structures are being investigated by the project team for consideration in the Environmental Impact Study to be released in early 2005.

Briefings for the project and in relation to other air quality matters for the city have indicated the growing scientific view that smaller and smaller exhaust particles may have health effects. Internal combustion engine vehicles and fossil fuelled power stations emit these particles.

Expert opinion provided to me has indicated that the greatest and quickest effect to decrease these particles and damaging gas emissions has been achieved through introduction of cleaner fuels.

The community has a right and justification to be concerned about the health effects of emissions. That is why I have insisted that Council develop the

tunnel to have world's best practice air quality and emission management standards.

“Congestion on roads will get worse”

The North South Tunnel will provide a key strategic road link by completing the inner city orbital road network. It will allow a significant amount of the 40% of traffic now on inner city streets to bypass the city and reach their destinations more efficiently. Design and management standards for the tunnel are being developed to minimise the opportunity for traffic congestion resulting from use of the tunnel.

To my knowledge NSBT does not mean that stages 2 and 3 will be brought forward. These stages would require much more detailed investigation before their feasibility could be established. The Lord Mayor is conducting pre-feasibility into his Transapex proposal for at least 4 more tunnels. No Labor Councillor is involved in this process. Despite requests no briefing has been afforded Labor Councillors at this time.

I strongly support much improved public transport services and infrastructure including the construction of extensions to the Northern Busway, greatly improved services and pedestrian links which are currently exasperated by the major surface roads bisecting these communities. I will continue to press for urban design and public transport infrastructure which maximises the surface road space vacated by traffic in the tunnel.

“The True Cost”

I am deeply concerned about the possible impact of the cost of this project and other tunnel proposals on the cities' excellent financial status. I do not want the excellent services such financial management has allowed the Council to deliver to the residents to be effected by these projects.

“Destruction of the Bowen Bridge Community”

I agree that the Bowen Hills community is well placed for further renewal opportunities. It is my firm position that NSBT enhances the opportunities for such renewal and development.

“Outdated safety features are being proposed”

I understand that the Lord Mayor has made formal representations to Federal agencies regarding security issues and the Tunnel.

I also understand that the project has been developed with safety features in excess of those found in Europe.

I agree that terrorist threats would stifle the traffic performance of the tunnel. It is equally true that this would be the case on existing facilities like the Storey Bridge or if we built a rail subway.

I disagree with many of the actions the Federal Government have taken in the name of fighting terrorism. I cannot support a position where we would not provide important economic infrastructure because it may one day be a terrorist target.

“There is a better solution”

I do not share the view that NSBT will ‘not be value for money investment’. Brisbane is the capital city at the centre of the fastest growing region in Australia. To maintain and improve the economic performance to meet this incredible growth requires significant strategic infrastructure investment.

I contend that any modern transport network, including that which would aim to significantly ‘reduce our reliance on private transport’, requires massive levels of investment and recurrent funding. Council’s Transport Plan 2016 points out that more than \$16 billion would need to be expended with a slant to PT spending to reduce reliance on private vehicles from 77% to 63% of all trips.

The Lord Mayor clearly believes that about 15km more toll road tunnels is the solution. He made this position clear throughout his election campaign. It will soon be for the people of Brisbane to consider the plan he has in development and voice their view.

Thank you for your continued critical consideration of these most important issue for our city. I hope to hear your voice again on this and may other points many times.

Yours sincerely



David Hinchliffe
**DEPUTY MAYOR
AND MAJORITY LEADER**

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