



Please quote: 64935/GM02/ECP

12 JAN 2005

Office of the Premier  
and Minister for Trade

Mr B Wilson  
Chairperson  
The Rivermouth Action Group Inc.  
PO Box 268  
MORNINGSIDE Q 4170

Dear Mr Wilson

Thank you for your letter of 19 October 2004 concerning Brisbane City Council's (BCC) proposed North South Bypass Tunnel (NSBT). I have been requested to reply to you on the Premier's behalf.

The State Government is strongly committed to achieving better transport outcomes in the State's South East region through the implementation of the Integrated Regional Transport Plan (IRTP) for South East Queensland and its companion document Transport 2007. Transport 2007 identifies a balanced program of infrastructure, policy and service improvements that need to be implemented in the short to medium term to deliver longer-term IRTP objectives.

Although the NSBT was not identified in the IRTP and Transport 2007, the State Government will continue its partnership with BCC to further develop transport improvements in South East Queensland (SEQ).

The Office of Urban Management is addressing the future transport challenges in SEQ through the development of the new SEQ Regional Plan. The draft SEQ Regional Plan was released on 27 October 2004, with an accompanying Infrastructure Plan expected to be released in April 2005. The SEQ Regional Plan will direct the future planning decisions of the State and local governments. The transport objectives of the plan are to create a connected and accessible region based on an integrated transport system that supports compact urban growth and efficient travel; connects people, places, goods and services; and promotes public transport use, walking and cycling.

In your correspondence you raised several issues relating to the NSBT. The State Government's approach is to find the right balance between private vehicle travel and more environmentally friendly modes of travel to develop a sustainable transport system for the region. The State Government and BCC are working collaboratively on a range of transport initiatives for Brisbane. In this instance, the NSBT project is a BCC initiative.

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The State Government has given support to BCC to develop a detailed feasibility analysis for the NSBT, subject to several conditions being met. The Coordinator-General, on 15 April 2004, declared the NSBT project to be a significant project for which an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required in accordance with Part 4 of the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*. The BCC is currently preparing an EIS to assess both the regional and local impacts and benefits of the project. The BCC is also developing concurrently a business case for the project.

Both the EIS and business case need to demonstrate that the project is technically and financially viable to the State Government's satisfaction, particularly the management of any cost or financial risks to the State. In undertaking the assessment, BCC have to apply the State Government's Public Private Partnership Policy and Value for Money Framework. Furthermore, the BCC must fully comply with the State Government's tolling policy, particularly in relation to preservation of free alternative routes and follow normal planning, impact assessment and consultation processes. Opportunities to provide additional capacity for public transport accessing the CBD will be investigated as part of this work.

The BCC has issued the draft business case to the State for review and is expected to submit the draft EIS to the State in early 2005. It is understood the BCC will release the draft EIS for public consultation in February 2005. The Terms of Reference for the EIS require that issues such as those raised in your letter including tunnel emissions, safety and congestion need to be addressed in the EIS and for environmental mitigation and management measures to be developed.

The State Government will undertake a comprehensive review of these documents to determine whether the NSBT project conforms with the State's conditions. This will enable the State to assess if the NSBT project would be technically and financially viable.

As you may appreciate, the proposed NSBT is a complex project which requires the involvement of a variety of agencies across governments. Its declaration as a significant project will ensure a coordinated approach to assessing the proposed tunnel's impact and viability.

The State Government and the BCC will continue to work collaboratively on the development and assessment of major infrastructure projects and public transport initiatives.

If you require any further information on the EIS process, please contact the NSBT Project Manager, Department of State Development and Innovation, on telephone (07) 3222 2841.

Thank you for bringing this matter to the Premier's attention.

Yours sincerely



**Damian McGreevy**  
**Acting Chief of Staff**