



18 NOV 2004

Mr Barry Wilson
Chairperson
The Rivermouth Action Group Inc
PO Box 268
Morningside Qld 4170

Dear Mr Wilson

North South Bypass Tunnel

Thank you for your letter of 19 October 2004 about Brisbane City Council's (BCC) proposed North South Bypass Tunnel (NSBT).

The State Government is strongly committed to achieving better transport outcomes in the 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.

The transport portfolio is now working with the Office of Urban Management to meet the future transport challenges in South East Queensland (SEQ) through the development of the new *SEQ Regional Plan*. The draft *SEQ Regional Plan* was released on 27 October 2004 and 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. Specifically, it will achieve more efficient use of land by creating more compact cities with less urban sprawl. To achieve this preferred urban pattern, the plan recommends higher densities in areas around centres, major public transport and other areas ready for redevelopment. 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 the BCC are working collaboratively on the development and assessment of major infrastructure projects and public transport initiatives for Brisbane. In this instance the NSBT project is a BCC initiative.

The State has given support to the BCC to develop a detailed feasibility analysis for the NSBT, subject to several conditions being met. The BCC are currently preparing an environmental impact statement (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. This needs 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. 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.

BCC is expected to submit the draft EIS and draft business case to the State in November 2004. 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.

Initiatives such as the South East Busway and the Inner Northern Busway (INB) are examples of the State Government's commitment to meeting the transport needs of the city. Sections 1 and 2 of the INB recently received joint State Government and BCC approval to proceed and a \$140m contribution from the State towards the project. Sections 1 and 2 involve the construction of a bus tunnel under King George Square connecting the Queen Street Bus Station to the southern entrance of the INB at Roma Street. This connection builds on the dedicated busway that will provide the opportunity for continuous right of way bus travel between the south and north of Brisbane.

Furthermore, in early 2004, the State Government announced a funding of \$400 million to improve the Citytrain passenger rail service. The bulk of this funding will be used to provide 24 new 3-car trains, an upgrade to the track infrastructure on the Gold Coast and Beenleigh corridors to support additional peak hour services and improvements to associated infrastructure such as noise walls. The balance will be used to fund additional rail/bus interchanges and commuter parking facilities, improvements to accessibility, upgrades to station buildings, safety and security works, and continuation of a program to overhaul and refurbish the older Citytrain fleet.

Queensland Transport is reviewing the future requirements for upgrades to the existing rail network to support continuing rail patronage growth and the ongoing development of an integrated public transport system in South East Queensland.

I trust the above addresses your concerns. If you require any further information please call Mr Stein Grodum, Manager (Transport Systems Planning) - Integrated Transport Planning Division on telephone 3306 7518.

Yours sincerely



Alan Tesch
A/Director-General