



Minister for Transport; Disability Services
Hon. Simon O'Brien MLC

Our ref: 29-03104/1
Your ref: SWG Minister Strategic Planning Jan 2009

20 APR 2009

Mayor Carol Adams
Chair South West Group Board
Locked Bag 1
BOORAGOON WA 6954

Dear Ms Adams

SOUTH WEST CORRIDOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

Thank you for your letter of 3 February 2009 conveying the South West Group's queries about south west corridor planning. I shall address these in the sequence presented in your letter.

1. The Government supports a target of 30% of containers shipped through the Inner Harbour at Fremantle being transported by rail, and will continue to provide a short-term subsidy to rail in support of that initiative. However, rail will need to develop efficiencies to compete with road transport in due course.
2. You may be aware that I recently announced the establishment of the Fremantle Ports Optimum Planning Group, which will develop recommendations for the long-term trade needs of Fremantle Ports and surrounding areas. The future roles of the Inner and Outer Harbours will be identified as part of that process.
3. The Local Impacts Committee, which was established by the former Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, the Hon Alannah MacTiernan MLA, was disbanded on completion of its final report in 2005.
4. The strategic transport planning being conducted in the south west corridor will reflect likely future increases in road container traffic resulting from larger container numbers being handled by the Inner Harbour of Fremantle Ports. Interested stakeholders, including the South West Group, are being consulted as part of the planning process.
- 5 & 6. The Government has sought, and will continue to seek, Commonwealth support whenever it is available, from Infrastructure Australia, the Nation Building Program, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) incentive payments or any other Commonwealth funding programs.

Historically, funding for public transport has always been the responsibility of the States. However, emerging issues such as climate change, world oil supply and urban congestion have prompted the Commonwealth to take a more active interest in public transport issues. However, that interest has yet to be translated into specific Commonwealth funding for public transport.

Funding for the Fremantle Outer Harbour project (road \$94.1 million and rail \$40.5 million) has been allocated by the Commonwealth under the Nation Building program (previously AusLink) over the five-year period commencing 2009-10, on a condition that there is a 50:50 cost sharing arrangement with the State. Cabinet has yet to consider the Commonwealth's proposed cost sharing arrangement.

7. I will continue to support arrangements that assist in clarifying the Government's policy position on the range of issues under my portfolio that are of importance to communities in the South West Region.

8. The need to replace the predominantly timber structure constructed in 1939 has been recognised by Main Roads Western Australia since the mid 1990s. Given the social, historical and economic importance of the bridge in Fremantle and surrounding communities, an extensive community engagement process was undertaken in 2006. That process involved a stakeholder workshop, community survey and community dialogue forum. Six options were considered by the community at the time and an aesthetic bridge, such as a cable-stayed structure that would form an entry statement to the City of Fremantle, was preferred.

However, there are currently insufficient funds available in Main Roads Western Australia's 2008-09 budget and forward estimates to undertake the construction of the replacement traffic bridge at the present time. Main Roads is examining the funding needs as part of the 2009-10 budget development process and you can be assured that this important project is under consideration by the Government.

Finally, I am keen to ensure that communities are kept advised of government policy and the status of projects that impact their local regions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon O'Brien', written in a cursive style.

**SIMON O'BRIEN MLC
MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT**