



Hon. Paul Lucas MP



Queensland
Government

Our ref: MC20593

Your ref: 492-05

Minister for
Transport and Main Roads

18 MAY 2006

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Re: Petition No. 492-05: North South Bypass Tunnel

I refer to a petition lodged with the Legislative Assembly by the Honourable Anna Bligh MP, Member for South Brisbane on 14 February 2006 about the suite of proposed Brisbane City Council (BCC) projects entitled TransApex and in particular the North South Bypass Tunnel (NSBT).

The Queensland Government works with governments at all levels to deliver better transport for Queensland.

The Queensland Government is supporting the BCC in its proposed NSBT. In a statement to Parliament on 8 March 2005, the Honourable Peter Beattie MP, Premier advised of the State Government's support for the NSBT. The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the State Government and BCC on 28 February 2005 indicates this support.

However, the State Government's support is conditional on BCC complying with a number of conditions. These cover a range of technical and financial issues as listed in the Memorandum of Understanding. A letter from the Premier to the Lord Mayor dated 28 February 2006 made this clear.

The State Government has also ensured that the project be required to comply with the Environmental Impact Statement conditions of the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*.

The purposes of the EIS were:

- To describe the existing environmental conditions in the area likely to be influenced by the proposal (that is, the study corridor);

85 George Street Brisbane
GPO Box 2644 Brisbane
Queensland 4001 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3237 1111
Facsimile +61 7 3224 4242
Email transport@ministerial.qld.gov.au

- To describe for the public and decision-makers the nature of the NSBT project and likely benefits and impacts;
- To assess the significance of the impacts and propose effective measures to mitigate or avoid such impacts; and
- To provide an opportunity for the community to make submissions about the project and the draft EIS.

The community and other stakeholders were encouraged to examine the draft EIS, and provide input to the Coordinator-General.

On 25 August 2005, the Co-ordinator General approved the NSBT EIS. This approval carried 21 conditions covering matters concerning noise and vibration, air quality, traffic management, waste management and ground and surface water.

A health risk assessment was done as part of this process with particular regard to air quality in the tunnel and in areas near the ventilation outlets. I understand that expert advice received as a part of this process was that these risks are extremely low.

I also understand that BCC is currently evaluating proposals from the private sector, and that this evaluation would include assessment against approval conditions.

In terms of the broader suite of TransApex projects, the State Government will be delivering complementary sustainable public transport policies, infrastructure and services. Examples include the construction of the Northern Busway from Enoggera Creek to Kedron (connecting to the existing Inner Northern Busway) and the proposed designation of lanes on Lutwyche Road/ Gympie Road as bus only or transit lanes as the NSBT and Northern Busway become operational.

Further, in keeping with the State Government's South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program 2005-2026, investigations are underway to continue the Northern Busway past Kedron to Bracken Ridge and to provide an Eastern Busway from Capalaba to Buranda.

As has been previously indicated in Parliament by the Premier, provided all the studies stack up and the right partner is found for a public-private partnership, the Queensland Government believes the NSBT project, and other TransApex projects, can improve transport, lifestyle and commerce in Australia's fastest growing region.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Lucas', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

PAUL LUCAS MP
Minister for Transport and Main Roads