



Warren Pitt MP
Member for Mulgrave



**Queensland
Government**

Our ref: MC31807

Your ref: 872-07

- 2 OCT 2007

**Minister for Main Roads and
Local Government**

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Cnr Alice and George Streets
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to petition No. 872-07 lodged with the Legislative Assembly by Mr John English MP, Member for Redlands, on 9 August 2007 about the construction of a toll bridge to North Stradbroke Island in Southern Moreton Bay (SMB).

Various state government planning documents, including the *South East Queensland Regional Plan (SEQRP)* and the *Moreton Bay Strategic Plan*, which identified the Moreton Bay Marine Park, do not support the concept of a bridge to the SMB islands.

I am advised the investigation of a bridge between the mainland and these islands would amount to a major transport planning study. The major transport planning studies to be pursued by the government are set out in the *South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program 2007-2026 (SEQIPP)*.

Any proposal or investigation to construct a bridge linking these islands to the mainland would be inconsistent with the strategic planning directions taken by the state government, as set out in these planning documents. Land use plans and the management of the local road network for these islands, which fall under the jurisdiction of Redland Shire Council, would need to be reconsidered to justify the construction of such bridges.

Such a major investment in infrastructure must also be considered in a whole-of-government context and included in the SEQIPP. Council was consulted during the preparation of the latest SEQRP and its position on the concept of a bridge between Brisbane and the SMB islands reflects that of the state government.

These documents also clearly indicate that, at least within the current 20 year planning horizon, a bridge to these islands and the inevitable land use changes that would result, would bring major environmental concerns. The Office of Urban Management (OUM) is responsible for reviewing land use proposals on these islands to justify the construction of bridges to the SMB islands. To ensure that the land use activities on these islands are consistent with those of council and the SEQRP, Ms Webb may wish to approach the OUM when the SEQRP is next updated in 2010.

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It is important to remember that for many people, the major attraction of living on the Bay Islands is the absence of direct vehicle access.

The SMB islands are already connected to the mainland by a comprehensive ferry and barge service supported by the state government.

These services already provide an effective facility for the movement of people and vehicles to and from the islands and preserve the existing marine environment unique to Moreton Bay. These services are provided on a commercial basis and according to comparisons undertaken by Queensland Transport (QT), can be considered reasonably priced.

Regarding Ms Webb's concerns over the cost and time involved in accessing these islands in the absence of a bridge, QT does not regulate or control barge fares, as these services are private commercial operations. QT regulates and controls the performance of the two ferry operators through contracts. These operators provide ferry services to the SMB Islands including Russell, Karragarra, Lamb and Macleay Islands and to Coochiemudlo Island.

These contracts benefit visitors and locals as they provide a degree of certainty in minimum service levels. Ferry operators must provide costly evening and weekend services, a half price fare of the adult fare for pensioner concession holders and fares must only rise in line with costs, – usually the consumer price index (CPI).

If Ms Webb requires any further information regarding the barge fares and services, please invite her to call Mr Dennis Sommers, Assistant Director, (Bus and Ferry Management) in Queensland Transport, on 3167 4526.

For any further information regarding the construction of a bridge to the SMB islands, Ms Webb may contact Mr Stephen Smaha, Principal Advisor (Development Control) in Metropolitan District, on 3834 8248. Mr Sommers and Mr Smaha will be pleased to assist.

Yours sincerely

Warren Pitt MP
Minister for Main Roads and Local Government