

The Hon. Richard Wynne MP
Minister for Planning
Level 16, 8 Nicholson Street
East Melbourne VIC 3002
Email: Richard.Wynne@parliament.vic.gov.au

12 February, 2020

Dear Minister Wynne,

West Gate Tunnel Project and [REDACTED]

Moorabool Shire Council (Council) officers met with representatives from the West Gate Tunnel Authority, Transurban, John Holland and [REDACTED] on Monday 10 February, 2020. While it confirmed that [REDACTED] has tendered to act as a receiving facility for unclassified spoil generated from the West Gate Tunnel Project, it was not considered consultation as there was insufficient information provided prior to the meeting for Council to prepare a consolidated response to the proposal.

It did however reinforce our concerns with the proposal and the lack of transparency and consultation to date.

It is understood that [REDACTED] proposes to request yourself, the Minister for Planning, to intervene and prepare an amendment to the Moorabool Planning Scheme under section 20(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. It is unclear the exact nature and form of the Amendment, however we were unofficially advised in the meeting on 10 January that they anticipate an Incorporated Document will be prepared for a designated part of the site.

It is acknowledged that section 20(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* refers to the ability of the Minister for Planning to amend the Planning Scheme without consultation, however it is expected that you will engage with Council throughout the process due to the complexity of the proposal. Council has in-depth local knowledge of the state of the roads, the potential impacts to the local environment and the community. Without an understanding of these local conditions, a robust assessment of the impacts is unlikely.

Council was informed that numerous technical impact assessments have been completed to draft stage, but not available for review as they have not been finalised. Conceding that Council may not receive the opportunity to review the assessments in time to provide comment, it is important to draw your attention now to a number of potential shortcomings of these assessments.

Economic Impact Assessment

Uncategorised spoil is proposed to be transported in an unsealed truck every 6 minutes through the Bacchus Marsh Avenue of Honour. This route is also the location of the Bacchus Marsh Irrigation District, housing many “pick your own” farms. It is the biggest tourist and family attraction business model in the Shire. If the spoil is classified as Category A or B waste, it will then need to be transported back through the Avenue of Honour in an unsealed truck to a different location.

There is no economic impact assessment or modelling proposed for this part of the project. Impacted businesses are a significant consideration for the West Gate Tunnel Project. Council would like the same consideration to be made for the local businesses that may be impacted by a true or perceived risk of contamination of the local waterways and environment.

Traffic Impact Assessment and Mitigation

As mentioned, it is understood that the proposed soil disposal may increase heavy vehicle movements to approximately one truck every six minutes. It was highlighted in previous correspondence that the local roads in their current state will not withstand this level of traffic. The increased truck movements raise significant safety concerns for Woolpack Road, Hopetoun Park Road, Bacchus Marsh Road, Bacchus Marsh-Geelong Road and the local roads adjacent to Maddingley Brown Coal.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Community Consultation

There is no proposed community consultation for the proposed disposal of the spoil. Given the proximity to the town of Bacchus Marsh, including many residential areas, and the potential socio-economic impact of the proposal, Council encourages the State Government to strongly consider formal public consultation as part of the approvals process.

Amendment Conditions

Council would like to embrace a co-ordinated approach to the assessment of the [REDACTED] proposal. Any decision to approve the proposal should include adequate mitigating measures to address adverse impacts to the environment and community, as well as provide positive community outcomes, not only in the interim but also in the long-term. Embracing the local knowledge and understanding of current conditions, Council suggests consultation and collaboration when developing and finalising the conditions to be set in the incorporated document for the planning scheme amendment.

Cumulative Impacts

Moorabool Shire prides itself in scenic country and uniquely individual places to live and visit, offering popular attractions including landscapes, national parks, forests, gorges and mineral springs. However, these qualities are under constant threat through Melbourne focussed State significant projects with impacts to the landfill to the south, State significant quarries to the north, three wind farms to the west, and the western high voltage powerlines dissecting through the middle.

These cumulative impacts are taking their toll on the community, through damaged liveability and reputation of the Shire. Long-term members of the community have expressed grave concerns to Council and are preparing an exit strategy.

Council expect the concerns for our community to be a priority for the State Government and to be kept informed in an open and transparent manner. I appreciate your time on this matter and I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Madden', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Derek Madden
Chief Executive Officer
Moorabool Shire Council

cc: The Hon. Jacinta Allan, Minister for Transport Infrastructure
Dr Kathy Wilkinson, CEO, Environmental Protection Authority Victoria