

In 2000 the Court Government stated that the construction of the Northbridge 'tunnel' (northern city bypass) would relieve congestion on the Causeway.

Now the Liberal/National opposition coalition is making similar claims about another expensive highway proposal this time in the southern suburbs. They are the proposed Roe Highway Stage 8 and the now deleted Fremantle 'bypass'.

4 years after the opening of the Graham Farmer Freeway and Northbridge 'tunnel' it is possible to test the accuracy of the claims made at the time. The results indicate that the Court Government was wrong about the impacts of the Northbridge 'tunnel' and this casts doubt on the claims now being made by the Liberal/Nationals about the proposed Roe Highway 8 and the now deleted Fremantle 'bypass'.



Typical morning traffic conditions at the Causeway (December 2004). Vehicles backed up in the westbound lanes from the Hay/Adelaide St traffic lights right across Heirisson Island.

The cyclist is moving as fast as the traffic. If you look carefully at this and the following pictures you will see motorists braking as they are forced to rapidly reduce speed. Clearly, the Court Government promise of no congestion and free flowing traffic conditions has not materialised.

One reason for this is the 'induced traffic' factor. The effect where building new highways encourages car drivers to use their car more, decide to take more or longer trips, switch routes or to use their car where they would have otherwise used an alternative means.

This is what has happened in this case. The study, *Perth's Farmer Freeway and Induced Traffic*, <http://www.mp.wa.gov.au/jscott/trac/PerthFarmerInduced.pdf> shows that since the opening of the 'tunnel' 20 000 extra vehicle trips per day occur through this area of Perth.

The extra traffic also caused significant traffic problems further afield in areas like Maylands and Belmont. <http://www.mp.wa.gov.au/jscott/trac/maylands.htm>



The Liberals, Nationals and Main Roads refuse to acknowledge the dynamic of induced traffic despite substantial evidence. See <http://www.sierraclub.org/sprawl/transportation/seven.asp> This is exacerbated by the deal done within the Liberal/National coalition to split the Planning and Transport portfolios ensuring there is little integrated planning.

The pictures below (taken December 2004) indicate the Northbridge 'tunnel' also suffers traffic congestion especially the westbound lane at the afternoon peak hour. Once again a careful look will show drivers in all three lanes braking as they are forced to slow down to half the permitted 80km/h.



'Tunnel' traffic has already reached the levels predicted for the year 2010, 80 000 to 90 000 vehicles per day. Level of Service is already at (LOS) E (Legislative Council, Question on Notice 2480, 11/11/2004) which is described as, " Traffic volumes are at or close to capacity. There is little freedom to select speed or to manoeuvre within the traffic stream."

The lesson here is that the Liberal/National coalition and Main Roads are stuck in the failed road-building policy of 'predict (badly) and provide'. In addition, a lack of detailed traffic origin-destination & traffic impact studies lead to bad guesswork. Progressive transport planners use the 'predict and avoid' scenario along with a detailed assessment of all alternative options and their impacts. With this method road building is used as a last recourse.