

Canning Vale, Traffic 'Planning' and Roe Highway

The completion of Roe Highway Stage 5 (Albany Highway to Nicholson Road) highlights another example of poor planning and insight on transport in the Perth metropolitan area.

The extension of Roe Highway (Stage 5) resulted in Nicholson Road in Canning Vale becoming a main feeder/distribution route for the Stage 5 extension. Despite the significant funding and resources poured into building Roe Highway, little or no research is done on the potential impacts to distributor roads linked to this, or any, new highway.

Included in the reasons for this are Main Roads' narrow focus (it claims it just builds major roads), Main Roads' inability or unwillingness to highlight the changes in traffic dynamics after the opening of major highways, Main Roads' successful attempts at hiding the real financial costs of major highway construction and local government lack of understanding about transportation issues and the impacts of the ever expanding highway network.

Any planning, and funding, of new highways should take into account potential changes in traffic flows and movement throughout areas adjacent to proposed highways. The funding of a new highway, or extension, should incorporate the costs of necessary changes to linking roads to cope with the expected traffic changes. This does not happen now as Main Roads successfully imposes that cost onto local communities via local government. A major pre-condition of this is that Main Roads WA ignores, or deliberately underestimates, the likely adverse traffic impacts to adjacent localities.

Our case example, Roe Stage 5/Nicholson Road connection in Canning Vale shows just this scenario. Below is an article from the City of Gosnells website (23/03/2004),

City Lobbies Canberra for More Funding

*Organised through Federal Member for Canning Don Randall, MP, City of Gosnells Mayor Patricia Morris AM JP and CEO Stuart Jardine, as part of a high powered delegation, held meetings with eight Ministers, including the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon John Anderson, MP and the Attorney General, the Hon Philip Ruddock, MP. Mayor Morris said one on one presentations were made to each Minister, seeking resources for important **road projects such as Nicholson Road, Canning Vale** and crucial funds for the Maddington Kenwick Sustainable Communities Partnership. "The meetings were constructive and positively received. I am optimistic that additional Commonwealth funding will flow to the City from our lobbying visit. We left each Minister in no doubt about the need for additional resources for a City that's one of the fastest growing areas in Australia today."*

That the Gosnells Council did not foresee this traffic problem says much about its own (lack of) transport planning. At the moment, Gosnells City is left to pay for most of the construction of new traffic lanes on Nicholson Road. The Council has expedited construction work due to the current traffic gridlock, congestion that should have been anticipated. Environmental groups did warn about such problems but those warnings were ignored.

Traffic banked up along Nicholson Road as far as the eye can see.



Same effect along Garden Street. Most of the cars are waiting to access Roe Highway.



[\(Is the wait really worth it? Probably not according to U.S. research\)](#)

Part of the Problem: Four lanes basically channel into one.



City of Gosnells roadworks can be seen here. When completed you will be able to get to the Rail crossing, or the traffic lights 200 metres further on, quicker. Grade separation along this section should have been a pre-condition of Roe Stage 5. The rail line is part of the State Governments proposed rail freight route to/from Fremantle Port and rail traffic is predicted to increase.





The roadworks have long been completed (January 2006). Only marginal improvements to traffic conditions have occurred. Traffic still stacks up past the rail crossing. The encouragement of urban sprawl to the south and east of this intersection, along with a lack of public transit, will lead to deteriorating road and traffic conditions.

