



The Honourable Scott Emerson MP
Minister for Transport and Main Roads

Our ref: PET 10835

Your ref: Petitions

7 MAY 2013

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

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to a petition number 2092-13 with the Legislative Assembly on 16 April 2013 about the Bruce Highway Upgrade Planning Study (Caloundra Road to Sunshine Motorway).

The Department of Transport and Main Roads has developed a preferred planning layout for the future upgrade of the Bruce Highway between Caloundra Road and the Sunshine Motorway. The planning proposes upgrades to the Caloundra Road and Sunshine Motorway interchanges, widening the highway from four to six lanes, and constructing a western service road between the interchanges for local traffic.

A draft plan was developed and released to the community for feedback from November 2011 to March 2012, after which an extensive review of the design was undertaken to consider community feedback. Following this, a preferred planning layout was released to the community in April 2013. The federal government has allocated \$400 million for priority Stage 1 works at the Sunshine Motorway and Caloundra Road interchanges. Construction timeframes are yet to be confirmed.

I acknowledge your concerns about the environmental impact of the future upgrade and assure you that the department is committed to minimising and closely managing the environmental impacts of its projects. The planning study involved extensive environmental investigations, including a comprehensive review of the flora and fauna within and near the upgrade area. The ecological investigations have included targeted assessments of the regional ecosystems, koala habitat, and targeted surveys for fauna species known to occur in proximity to the project area. The department has also liaised with the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection to consider and manage any environmental impacts of the project.

As you are aware, the planning proposes realigning a section of Steve Irwin Way to the north of the Mooloolah Cemetery. This realignment of Steve Irwin Way is required to enable the construction of the upgraded Caloundra Road interchange, and for the highway to be widened from four to six lanes. During a review of the draft plan, changes were made to the proposed Steve Irwin Way realignment resulting in a significant reduction in the state forest requirement from 35 hectares to 24 hectares, and relocation of the Steve Irwin Way/western service road roundabout approximately 200 metres closer to the highway.

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I can confirm the realignment of Steve Irwin Way will not impact on the National Park and 'high-value' environmental land immediately to the north-west of the Caloundra Road interchange. The department recognises the importance of preserving this area of environmental value and has ensured it was not impacted as part of the Steve Irwin Way realignment. The realignment will require some state forest land to the south-west of the Caloundra Road interchange and while it is acknowledged this land holds environmental value, it has been identified as an area that has less environmental risks than the area to the north of Steve Irwin Way.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Scott Emerson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Scott Emerson MP
Minister for Transport and Main Roads