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HON JOHN BRUMBY, MLA
Premier of Victoria.

HON ANTHONY ALBANESE, MP
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

5th January 2010

Calder Action Group Inc.– Funding for Calder Park Drive Overpass in FY10/11

Dear

We wrote in April last year on the safety of the Calder Freeway in the Keilor section. Since then we are delighted that work has commenced on the Kings Road Overpass as a jointly funded project with the Federal Government under Auslink 2. Since then we have also been in consultation with the Calder Highway Improvement Committee (CHIC) and local Brimbank Council to determine the best next project in this dangerous section of the highway. We would like to present the situation as we now see it and to seek your support for further funding for this work.

We are aware that

- a. The planned projects, to achieve a full freeway standard road to improve safety and capacity for the section from the Western Ring Road to the Diggers Rest exit, include three new inter-changes and widening of the freeway over the bridges.
- b. Both State and Federal Governments have committed \$30 million for an interchange at Kings Road on the Calder Freeway as part of Auslink 2.
- c. Road accidents continue to occur on this section of the road at an unacceptable rate and no further projects have yet been committed.
- d. Preliminary planning for all the work is complete.
- e. Some minor interim work has been completed to reduce run-off-road crashes – adding guardrails, wire-rope guards and tactile edging. The lighting for the Calder Park Drive exit is also complete.
- f. The frustrating and potentially risky 80 km speed limit over the 5 km stretch of the outbound road in this section will not be lifted until the full project scope is completed.

Our consultations with the CHIC and Council have confirmed that the most important and urgent next project for this section of the Calder should be the planned **overpass at the Calder Park Drive exit**. This project, which will involve about the same level of joint funding, ie in the region of \$60M. Additional State Government road work on the approaches will be need in the same way as at Kings Road.

In the 5 years prior to October 2004 (prior to the works currently completed), there had been:-

41 casualty crashes which included 5 fatal crashes, 20 serious injury crashes, and 16 minor injury crashes.

Recent data shows that in the 5 years from Oct 2004 to Oct 2009, there have still been:-

31 casualty crashes which included 1 fatal crash, 13 serious injury crashes and 17 minor injury crashes.

While the works to date have resulted in a reduction in these fatal and serious injury crashes the situation is still grave.

Coupled with the above is the significant demographic profile change experienced in this part of the Northwest region; in particular Taylor's Lakes, Hillside and Caroline Springs have a growth rate which is near the top for the state. The recent release of land in the Sunbury area by the State Government will over time place a further hazardous burden on the Calder Freeway/Calder Park Drive interchange exacerbating its present threat to safety. This future trend should also weight forthcoming funding priorities.

The economic benefits from smoothing traffic flow and environmental reduction in pollutants are also tangible benefits from the proposed investment.

It is clear to us that, unless this situation is continually brought to the attention of both Governments, progress is likely to continue to be unacceptably slow. By giving strong budgetary support for this Calder Park Drive Overpass project in the forthcoming financial considerations you will maintain the progress recently made with the Kings Road Project and give our community some hope that this seriously hazardous road section will finally be completed and brought up to the requisite safety and effectiveness standard.

The North West of Victoria deserves your strong support of this project and we look forward to its inclusion in funding for next year.

Yours sincerely,

Russell S. Mowatt
President,
Calder Action Group Inc.

FOR INFORMATION

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Hon Candy Broad MLA
Hon Justin Madden, MLA
Terry Mulder MLA
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