

PRESS RELEASE

5 August 2005

Committee for Ballarat seeking a Deer Park By-Pass

The Committee for Ballarat at its July meeting, announced that they would form a task team to work with stakeholders to secure Government funding for the Deer Park by-pass as a freeway standard by-pass of some 9.3 kilometres connecting the Western Ring Road at Ardeer with the Western Highway at Ravenhall.

The Western Highway is the second busiest highway link in Australia in terms of interstate freight movements, however improvements are needed due to dramatically increased traffic load since its original design. The Committee for Ballarat will be lobbying State and Federal government to provide the necessary funding, of some \$294 million to ensure that the Deer Park By-Pass will increase the economic and social benefits to Ballarat and region, significantly increase safety for users and reduce congestion around Melton & Deer Park to enable the Western Highway to be used to its fullest potential.

Congestion will continue to burden users of the highway with an anticipated 92% increase in population in the areas of Melton, Moorabool and Ballarat between 2001 and 2030. Major traffic delays and severe congestion are only exacerbated by the extensive residential development occurring in the corridor. The construction of the Deer Park by-pass is seen as imperative for the Western Highway to cope with increased usage.

The Deer Park by-pass will assist to increase regional population, provide saving's to regional freight users, create an increase in regional tourism revenues, an increase in regional investment, and improvement in access to services and jobs, according to a report compiled for the Western Highway Action Group of Councils by Sinclair Knight Merz.

"How can the Commonwealth Government get it so wrong! I understand that the Deer Park Bypass is the State Governments number one priority for Victoria. Every council and their communities along the highway from the South Australia border to Melbourne have Deer Park as their number one infrastructure priority and yet we still cannot get the Commonwealth Government to fund it." Mr Noel Coxall, Chair Committee for Ballarat.

A project specific objective was tabled at the July meeting of the Committee for Ballarat by Corporate members, Shire of Moorabool on behalf of all Western Highway Councils requesting the Committee for Ballarat to play a lead lobbying and advocacy role to seek early funding approval for the Deer Park By-pass project.

Committee for Ballarat Chair, Noel Coxall said that Canberra needs to wake up and address this issue now. The Western Highway corridor is seriously suffering from the congestion and recent studies show we are losing millions of dollars annually. The Committee for Ballarat is very pleased to take on this PSO and see it to fruition. With holding money for Victorian road projects is most damaging to our State." Mr Noel Coxall, Chair Committee for Ballarat.

A task team consisting of the following people has been selected to work on the project:

* Noel Coxall, Chair Committee for Ballarat & Coxall Group of Industries

* Cr Peter Russell, Mayor Shire of Moorabool and Chairman of the Western Highway Action Committee

Cr David Vendy, Mayor City of Ballarat

David Haymes, Haymes Paint

Jeremy Johnson, Sovereign Hill

Phil Lovell, Victorian Transport Association

Dr Ken Ogden, RACV

Jamie Sargeant, Sargeant Transport

Bruce Morgan, The Courier

Robert Dobrzynski, Moorabool Shire Council

Anthony Stone, FMP Group

John King, J.G. King

*These Committee for Ballarat members are authorised to speak to the media on the Deer Park By-Pass in addition to Noel Coxall, Chair Committee for Ballarat and Ross Haby, Executive Director Committee for Ballarat.