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Minister for the Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy
Minister for City Services
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Member for Ginninderra

Mr Tom Duncan
Clerk
ACT Legislative Assembly
London Circuit
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Duncan

Tom

Thank you for your letter regarding petition 031-23, lodged by Mark Parton MLA, regarding access roads to connect Tralee to the Monaro Highway.

The ACT Government recognises the importance of an effective and productive relationship between the ACT Government and Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council (QPRC) as our closest neighbour. In addition to engaging with QPRC through membership of the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, the ACT Government and QPRC engage directly under the ACT-QPRC Statement of Intent. The ACT Chief Minister and Mayor of QPRC also meet during the year to facilitate ongoing dialogue between the two jurisdictions. As our respective urban footprints continue to expand, ensuring compatibility of future development, transport linkages and associated infrastructure is critical.

In November 2023, the ACT Government held an ACT / NSW Regional Cross-border Transport Roundtable comprising the then-ACT Minister for Transport and City Services, the NSW Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, the QPRC Mayor and General Manager, local members and senior officials from the ACT, NSW, QPRC and the Australian Government. The Roundtable was held to discuss cross border connections between the Monaro Highway in Hume and new developments in Queanbeyan and surrounding area.

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The ACT Government, through the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate (TCCS), is delivering upgrades to the Monaro Highway within the ACT. Under this program, preliminary design will be completed for new interchanges at Hume and Isabella Drive, and a new interchange is under construction at Lanyon Drive including an extension of David Warren Road.

TCCS has had ongoing engagement with QPRC and the NSW Government agency responsible for planning of the proposed Regional Jobs Precinct (RJP) on the delivery of these upgrades over several years. This has included regular meetings, and sharing of traffic modelling data and information on development timing to inform works on both sides of the border.

The Roundtable recognised the work undertaken by the ACT Government on the Lanyon Drive interchange to ensure the ACT network could accommodate additional demand from NSW, and acknowledged this interchange is designed to meet the future demand from development in the adjacent NSW region, including the new suburb of South Jerrabomberra. The new Lanyon Drive interchange has been designed with capacity for the 1500 residences in the NSW suburb of South Jerrabomberra (formally known as Tralee) via Lanyon Drive. This provides the north connection from NSW into the ACT network.

The Roundtable agreed that a second connection between the ACT and NSW network would be most appropriately located to the south of Hume connecting the future Dunns Creek Road in NSW, to be delivered by QPRC, through the new interchange at Isabella Drive (the Dunns Creek Road project). This south connection will also connect South Jerrabomberra (Tralee) into the ACT network however is dependent on delivery of the Dunns Creek Road project. A third connection was not identified as required.

A commitment was made between the jurisdictions at the Roundtable to undertake further work to better understand delivery, cost benefit analysis and funding requirements with a commitment to continue working together on cross border connections, including utilisation of existing mechanisms, including the Canberra Region Joint Organisation. Since the Roundtable was held, TCCS and QPRC have had subsequent discussions to further progress cross border network planning.

Options were investigated by TCCS for a connection from Environa Drive to Lanyon Drive, at the north end of the South Jerrabomberra development via Sheppard Street in Hume. This option is not feasible for several reasons: it creates network failure of the Sheppard Street and Lanyon Drive intersection, there are significant safety issues with mixing Hume industrial precinct traffic and residential traffic, the cost and significant disruption caused by the requirement to relocate utility mains infrastructure that is directly underneath the existing road, and environmental constraints in the connecting corridor including a waterway and proximity to Jerrabomberra Creek. The network failure outcome and the costs are prohibitive, as well as the inherent safety issue with mixing high volumes of residential and industrial traffic, and significant constructability issues with the waterway and critical utility infrastructure.

I am also advised there is no existing formal road access into the ACT directly between NSW and the Hume Industrial precinct given access via Arnott Street is not formalised nor supported by Roads ACT for the above reasons.

Further, in 2023, TCCS undertook a feasibility assessment of an interim connection (within 5 years) from Dunns Creek Road, following construction by QPRC, into the ACT network. Two interim options were investigated to connect from Dunns Creek Road to the Monaro Highway: an at-grade connection into the existing roundabout at Isabella Drive; and a connection into Tralee Street and on to the Monaro Highway either at the Tralee Street or Sheppard Street intersection.

Options tested through the modelling are as follows:

- Base case: Monaro Highway Upgrade Package 1 (Lanyon Drive Interchange) completed and operational. Package 2 (new interchanges at Hume and Isabella Drive) and interim connections from South Jerrabomberra not constructed.
- Option 1: An at-grade connection from South Jerrabomberra to the end of Tralee Street, with traffic routing through the Hume industrial estate to access the existing intersections at the Monaro Highway (i.e. Tralee Street and Sheppard Street). Modelling in this option also represents outcomes for routing traffic through the Hume industrial estate via Anderson/Alderson Place.
- Option 2: An at-grade connection from South Jerrabomberra to the Monaro Highway / Isabella Drive intersection through the addition of a fourth leg to the roundabout.

The two connections (Option 1) were found to have unacceptable traffic impacts with the traffic modelling showing network failures through significant and unacceptable congestion in the PM peak, southbound on the Monaro Highway, and through the Hume Industrial Precinct. Traffic modelling concluded Option 1 resulted in overall reduced network efficiency as evidenced by increased Vehicle Kilometres Travelled and Vehicle Hours Travelled. Furthermore, Option 2 would result in significant queuing and congestion on the Monaro Highway southbound towards Tuggeranong as well as reductions to intersection performance and overall network performance. TCCS has shared this information with QPRC who are aware of the issues.

Ultimately, the delivery of the Dunns Creek Road interchange is required to support the second, south connection from South Jerrabomberra (Tralee) into the ACT network from South Jerrabomberra once the new Dunns Creek Road is constructed. The Dunns Creek Road interchange would provide significant benefits well beyond the ACT, including to residents in South Jerrabomberra and vehicles and freight travelling to and from Southern NSW and the Snowy Mountains.

Given the national significance of this project and the benefits to NSW, the ACT Government would require funding and support from a number of stakeholders before consideration can be made to possibly constructing the Dunns Creek Road interchange, including the NSW and Australian Governments, QPRC and the developer of South Jerrabomberra.

The ACT Government, including TCCS, will continue to work with our QPRC, NSW and Australian Governments counterparts to ensure effective cross border transport network planning.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



Tara Cheyne MLA
Minister for City Services
13 May 2024



Chris Steel MLA
Minister for Transport
13 May 2024