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Calder Action Group Inc

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Hon Darren Chester, MHR
Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development

Calder Action Group Inc.– Calder Park Drive Overpass

Dear Minister,

We last wrote to your predecessor on 20 November 2015 pressing the case for early consideration of the Calder Park Drive Overpass project on the Calder Freeway in Keilor. We offer our congratulations on your new appointment and hope as a Victorian regional MP we may be able to interest you in this particular issue.

As we have written previously, in late October the Planning Panels Victoria held a hearing on the Environment Effects Statement and related planning issues on the long term Palmers Road Project; of which the Overpass in question is a priority part. Our group presented a submission to this hearing in which we stressed the urgency and priority of establishing a full freeway standard on this Keilor section of the Calder. Although there have been a number of safety related improvements in recent years we are still concerned that, unless the further work needed is done, there will continue to be safety and economic penalties affecting all users.

The recent increase in the speed limit over part of this section to 100 km/hr was the subject of extensive favourable public interest on social media, a strong indicator of the importance of the issue. However, there remain two sections of the 'freeway' in this area which are clearly below current safety standards and require speed restrictions. The priority one of these is the Calder Park Drive Overpass.

We have often stressed urgency on the basis of the strong population growth. The problem illustrated in our last letter of traffic blockage at the rail overpass affecting the Calder is just one indicator of the trend to increasing problems unless action can be taken soon.

The findings of the Panels enquiry above are due to be released shortly so, in pressing for action now we can only assume the outcome. However it is apparent from the associated hearing documentation that the design work is essentially now available and the project should be categorised as 'shovel ready'. We can only hope that this might also give it some chance in the forthcoming budget considerations at both State and Federal levels

On behalf of the strong interest in this issue among the residents and businesses along this lifeline to North Western Victoria, we again seek urgent consideration of the funding of the Calder Park Drive Overpass project.

In view of the forthcoming Federal election and the strong interest shown recently by Federal Labour Party MPs along the Calder, we would like the opportunity to meet with you, in conjunction with Chris Jermyn, McEwen Liberal candidate, to clarify any detail and to emphasise the community interest in this important local issue.

Ian T Sutherland AO
President, Calder Action Group Inc.

