

Maribyrnong Truck Action Group (MTAG)

Anger is again rising in the inner west after the state government failed to fund the 'Truck Action Plan' to take trucks off residential streets in the inner west.

The project is budgeted at \$380 million in the Victorian Transport Plan and building was supposed to begin this year. Instead there is just \$21 million for planning and early works on the Truck Action Plan and the WestLink tunnel including a \$6.2 million Commonwealth contribution.

"It's a bit of a letdown. Effectively there is nothing in the budget for the Westgate ramps given the government announced \$11 million of this some months ago," said MTAG spokesman Peter Knight.

The ramps were slated as a 'priority' in the Victorian Transport Plan and through 2009 MTAG had meetings with Marsha Thomson, Wade Noonan and Tim Pallas and were assured that this project would go ahead.

This latest development comes after 10 years of fighting by community groups to have something done about the 20,000 trucks a day that use residential streets in the inner west.

"In 2007 MTAG commissioned a company to conduct a health survey and it revealed asthma levels three times higher than those of other Melbournians," said Peter Knight. "These trucks do not constitute an inconvenience, they represent a health emergency."

"Something needs to be done urgently about this problem. We've been saying it for years now, Sir Rod Eddington said it, Minister Pallas admitted it, and these ramps have been on VicRoads' drawing board for more than a decade, we hope we're not going to be waiting for too much longer."

MTAG is still very hopeful of good news when Infrastructure Australia announces its funding round in a month or so but whatever happens has reiterated its commitment to fight to ensure that something is done about this intolerable situation.

"We'll do whatever we need to and hope that the progress that has been made in the last 12 months will continue," said Peter Knight.

For information contact Peter Knight phjk@me.com or on 0409 797 852