



12 May 2015

## **SUBMISSION ON THE WESTERN DISTRIBUTOR CONCEPT DESIGNS**

MTAG's support of this project is conditional; we have consistently communicated this position from the project's announcement.

The conditions that must be met for our approval are achievable and affordable for a project of this scale. Our community is long overdue for a real solution to the impacts of over 21,000 truck movements each day. For decades we have paid the price of having a majority of Melbourne's freight movements on our streets. Trucks pass just metres from our homes, families, schools and community centres. Every hour, every day, every week, year after year trucks are poisoning us with cancer causing diesel emissions.

We have paid the price with our health and loss of amenity for our community. The City of Maribyrnong has asthma rates 50% higher than the Victorian average, we have the state's highest hospital admission rates for children aged 0-16 and we are admitted to hospitals for respiratory issues at rates 171% above the Australian average.

Truck related air pollution has seen Yarraville's inclusion in Environmental Justice Australia's top ten air pollution hotspots in Australia.

**The two unconditional measures that must be met for MTAG's support of this project are:**

- 1. Permanent 24 hour truck bans on residential streets - The Western Distributor must, on completion, see the immediate implementation of permanent 24 hour truck bans on residential streets in Melbourne's inner west. These roads are Williamstown Rd, Francis Street, Somerville Road, Buckley Street and Moore Street.**
- 2. World's best practice filtration of vent stacks – It is not simply enough for your vent stacks to comply with current Victorian EPA regulations. Australia lags behind European and USA regulation for air pollution, particularly ultra fine particles such as 2.5 micrometers and smaller. These are the particles that cause the most severe health impacts. We demand that this project achieves a world's best for air pollution mitigation.**

## **Concept design options – Westgate Freeway to tunnel**

MTAG does not support the shorter tunnel option. A shorter tunnel means loss of open space in the Hyde Street Reserve and increased noise and air pollution for the nearby community. This is simply not acceptable on any condition to us.

The inner west already has a deficit of open space compared to most parts of Melbourne. MTAG believes it is crucial to the well being of our community to preserve our existing open space. The communities of Melbourne's inner west have for decades been carrying an unfair burden in terms of the impacts of freight movements in and out of the Port of Melbourne. We firmly believe that any new infrastructure such as the Western Distributor, which offers solutions to the impact of port trucks, must not come at a further cost to our community. Over the past two decades we have carried more than our fair share of the burden in noise, pollution, loss of amenity and negative health impacts of truck freight movements. It is inequitable to expect our community to lose precious open space as an outcome of being provided with a solution.

A shorter tunnel design will decimate the Hyde Street Reserve in terms of elevated roads and the placement of the tunnel portal itself. The main feature of the Hyde Street Reserve is Stony Creek. The short tunnel's multiple lanes of overhead-elevated roadway will destroy this amenity. The short tunnel option will also have a detrimental impact in terms of noise and air pollution for the adjoining residential areas, the Yarraville Community Centre and people using the reserve.

The longer tunnel option limits the footprint of the planned toll road to the existing freeway reserve and has the least impact on Stony Creek. Any negative impacts that this design has in terms of disruptions to existing traffic flows is simply a cost that all Melbournians' need to share. Mitigating these short-term disruptions should not equate to the permanent loss of open space for residents in the inner west, not just for us but also for future generations.

Lost open space can never be replaced. Melbourne's population is growing rapidly and is projected to continue for decades to come. Open space is critical to a community's livability, we implore you not trade our open space for road infrastructure.

## **Concept design options – Hyde Street access**

MTAG supports a connection to Hyde Street to ensure that placarded loads do not continue to use the residential streets of Melbourne's inner west. A project of this size and cost will simply be a failure if it leaves placarded loads on our streets.

Of the five options presented for the Hyde Street connection, MTAG only offers conditional support for Option 4. We believe this option, while not perfect, is the most equitable in terms of minimising impacts on local communities and open space. It also removes the need for additional freeway flyovers. Our support for this option comes with the following caveats.

1. The road infrastructure on the Northern side of the freeway must be built as close to the West Gate Freeway/Bridge as possible. It is essential that this road is not built over Stony Creek and that the waterway is left untouched. The road must have noise and visual barriers to ensure it has minimal impact on Hyde Street Reserve and Westgate Golf Club. Recreation users should not see or hear the traffic on this road.
2. The road infrastructure on the southern side of the freeway must also hug the freeway as

closely as possible to minimise impacts on the sporting clubs and communities on Hope Street. This road must also feature noise and visual barriers to minimise its impacts on neighbouring communities. The Socobell factory will need to be relocated to achieve this outcome.

We do not support the other options for the Hyde Street connection for these reasons:

**Option 1:** Is dependant on the short tunnel, an option we do not support.

**Option 2:** Has unacceptable impacts on the Hyde Street Reserve. This option would see two roads impacting on our open space, particularly on the Stony Creek waterway.

**Option 3:** Has a negative impact on existing sporting facilities on either side of the freeway, Westgate Golf Club and Spotswood Cricket Club. The elevated ramp crossing the existing West Gate Freeway will have a huge visual impact on neighbouring communities as well as increasing noise travel. These roads would also have a negative impact on housing and a kindergarten on Hope Street.

**Option 5:** Has similar impacts to option 3 but its closer proximity to housing and the kindergarten on Hope Street will see the greatest impacts in terms of noise and air pollution for this community. Its design featuring tight corners may present additional road safety concerns for trucks. This could ultimately be a disincentive for truck drivers to use this route.

The Victorian government, working with Transurban, has an opportunity to build a project that actually improves the outcomes for a community impacted by freight pollution. This is your chance to show, not just our community, but also the wider Australian public how a large-scale road project can deliver a great outcome for an inner city community impacted by air pollution.

We challenge you to make our community, not just a little bit better but a whole lot better as a result of this planned Transurban project.



*Martin Wurt*  
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*Maribyrnong Truck Action Group (MTAG)*