



**Hon. Diane Evers MLC**  
Member for the South West Region

Attn: Mrs Maddison Evans, Committee Clerk  
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs  
Parliament House  
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Committee Members,

**PETITION NUMBER 134 – BUNBURY OUTER RING ROAD SOUTHERN SECTION**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a written submission to the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs regarding Petition No. 134 – Bunbury Outer Ring Road (BORR) Southern Section. I confirm that I wish the Government/Committee to inquire into the matters raised in the petition. To the best of my knowledge, the issues described in this petition have not been taken to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations (Ombudsman).

The petitioners are opposed to the construction of the proposed route of the Bunbury Outer Ring Road through Gelorup, particularly given that the highest overall impact route was chosen by the Minister. The proposed route is unacceptable to many in the community. The recent alteration to the original proposal to save the Giant Tuart - which I agree should be saved - has caused enormous stress for landowners who have been consistently promised that there would be no need for land acquisition. Thirty-three landowners will be affected by the proposed route change, and the social, economic and environmental impacts of this require further examination. Ideally, the Government should work more effectively and democratically with community members and stakeholders to identify a better route.

As I have acknowledged previously, the BORR is intended to provide an alternative route for freight and general traffic around Bunbury, and achieve a number of other objectives<sup>1</sup>. I am aware that Main Roads formed an integrated project team that undertook what they refer to as an 'extensive program of community and stakeholder engagement. Ongoing activities include two community reference groups; community drop-in sessions; landowner meetings; local government consultation; consultation with special interests, including freight industry, road user groups, community groups and Bunbury port; and regular project updates to members of the community'. However, the design of these processes did not incorporate best practice collaboration and dialogue, as outlined on the widely used International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) spectrum of community involvement<sup>2</sup>, specifically the right hand side of the spectrum - "collaborate" and "empower".

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<sup>1</sup> <https://project.mainroads.wa.gov.au/home/Documents/BORR%20Southern%20CRG%20Meeting%20-%20July%202018.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.iap2.org.au/resources/spectrum/>



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Although I have been provided information about the types of workshops, topics covered and the participants who attended, there is no evidence that the workshops were able to come up with solutions that everyone could live with. No independent third party evaluation of the workshops was undertaken. This suggests that the outcomes of the consultation process are not sufficiently robust to have adequately informed the decision-making process, calling into question whether Main Roads have effectively achieved “Community and Stakeholder Trust and Support”, one of the primary areas in their Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia (ISCA) certification<sup>3</sup>. Had these processes been more deliberative, representative, inclusive and influential, Main Roads would have been able to integrate the concerns of residents who are negatively impacted by land resumptions as a result of attempts to respond to the need protect the Giant Tuart in order to come up with a better route. The problem has been exacerbated by the fact that landowners were repeatedly assured that the road reserve was wide enough to accommodate the road without land resumption. This has understandably created great angst amongst local community members. It’s a wicked problem, of course, however I know Main Roads has approached controversial issues more deliberatively in the past, in the Road Train Summit<sup>4</sup> and the Reid Highway Extension Citizens' Jury<sup>5</sup>, for example. Main Roads is therefore capable of undertaking more effective public participation than has been achieved in this instance, to provide a widely supported, well-conceived project.

The EPA is currently undertaking a PER of the proposal and has requested information including the consideration given to alternative alignments (which I argue has been inadequate); additional surveys to confirm impacts to threatened/priority ecological communities and threatened flora/fauna; environmental management plans to avoid, minimise and manage impacts to threatened/priority ecological communities and threatened fauna; additional information on the mitigation and management of impacts to social surroundings, including but not limited to, noise and a requirement for noise modelling; and an offsets strategy for significant residual impacts. These are significant issues that may undermine the route choice. The Government’s argument that ‘Due to the length of time involved in acquiring land for road projects, it is not feasible to wait for environmental approval before commencing the land acquisition process<sup>6</sup>’ is alarming. It may well be standard practice but it suggests a commitment to their preferred route regardless of public input. I therefore ask the Legislative Council to support the petitioners’ request for the State Government to identify and implement a viable alternative.

Yours sincerely,



Hon Diane Evers MLC

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<sup>3</sup> <https://project.mainroads.wa.gov.au/home/Documents/Key%20priority%20areas.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [https://espace.curtin.edu.au/bitstream/handle/20.500.11937/12861/183197\\_50636\\_JHK\\_DM\\_Modsim\\_H2.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y](https://espace.curtin.edu.au/bitstream/handle/20.500.11937/12861/183197_50636_JHK_DM_Modsim_H2.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y)

<sup>5</sup> <https://participedia.net/case/4528>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Hansard/hansard.nsf/0/ee27a66e95c8b0f3482584ba002d362c/\\$FILE/C40+S1+20191120+p9055c-9056a.pdf](https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/Hansard/hansard.nsf/0/ee27a66e95c8b0f3482584ba002d362c/$FILE/C40+S1+20191120+p9055c-9056a.pdf)