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Your ref: EC.09.15

5 August 2009

Ms Lyndel Bates
The Research Director
Economic Development Committee
Parliament House
George Street,
Brisbane, Qld 4000
edc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Ms Bates

I refer to your letter of 8 July to Hon Craig Wallace MP and Hon Rachael Nolan MP about the invitation to make a submission into the Economic Development Committee Inquiry into employment opportunities in Queensland. Your letter was referred to the Honourable Craig Wallace MP, Minister for Main Roads, and Honourable Rachael Nolan MP, Minister for Transport, for consideration and response. The Ministers have asked that I respond on their behalf.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads plays an important role in supporting the State Government's current economic and employment strategies. Over the next 12 months, the State Government will invest \$7.1 billion into roads infrastructure and public transport services which will support job creation across Queensland. Some major roads projects include the second Gateway Bridge and the Airport Link, and major transport projects include the Eastern and Northern Busways and the Gold Coast Rapid Transit System. Such projects employ thousands of Queenslanders directly and indirectly.

Responding to the state's population growth the department is increasing our road, rail and ports infrastructure and improving our public transport system. The management of people and freight travel, transporting Queenslanders efficiently, safely and reliably, and creating job opportunities has emerged as a government priority. The management of traffic congestion, especially in Brisbane and the South East Queensland, is being addressed by investing \$94.6 billion into road, rail and public transport projects via the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program (SEQIPP) 2009–2026. Since 2005 this program has directly and indirectly employed 130 000

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people, and another 770 000 jobs are in the pipeline until 2026.

Supporting Queensland's Regions

For the department to continue to meet the needs of our stakeholders, further development of rural and regional roads, rail and ports infrastructure will increase access to, and connectivity of, rural and regional Queensland communities. This strategy supports the 'fair' government priority as outlined in the Q2 Tomorrow's Queensland document. Job opportunities will be created in these locations through increased construction activity and through improved regional development in industries such as agriculture, mining and tourism. It will also support the Queensland Government's 'smart' strategy by providing further opportunities for local training initiatives.

Research and Development (R&D) and Commercialisation

The department will also be focusing on remaining at the forefront of roads and transport services and further improving our technical capability and increasing job opportunities. This could be through expanding our research and development program, and commercialising the suite of innovative products we have developed. Research priorities in the roads and transport sector include:

- the design and construction of roads to improve road safety and reduce carbon emissions
- road and transport systems which improve efficiency and accessibility
- 'green' solutions such as eco-friendly road surfaces, and
- 'health' focussed for example, improving air quality.

We will also increase our capability through closer relationships with universities and industry experts as we firmly position ourselves as thought leaders in the sector. This could stimulate job opportunities in the research and development, policy, community engagement, business, engineering and construction sectors.

To further add value the department may be able to commercialise successful products and licence its intellectual property. For example, the department has been innovative and creative in solving problems and improving processes and practices, some of which could possibly be commercialised. Of note, the 'Anti-gawking' screens which when installed on roads under construction have significantly decreased the accident rate and improved traffic flow. These products also have the potential to be sold and marketed internationally.

Maintaining and developing our human capital

The Department's ability to deliver on current and future works depends heavily on its workforce. To ensure we have the human resource capability the department has developed and implemented an array of innovative solutions to attract, develop and retain its workforce. Human resource management strategies including targeted strategic recruitment, occupation specific career

management programs, “grow our own” development programs and flexible work arrangements, have enabled us to maintain and develop our capacity and capability in light of an engineering and construction skills shortage. These are now embedded as some of the department’s core programs that enable us to successfully deliver on our road and transport projects, and enable the State Government to meet the demand of a growing Queensland population, improving the quality of life for Queenslanders and providing jobs.

With the department playing an important role in the State’s infrastructure program and continued economic growth, sustaining and developing our workforce capacity and capability, accessing R&D opportunities, adapting to the industry trends and meeting community needs will enable us to generate more jobs and continue to deliver on our program of works.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Martin', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Steve Martin
Executive Director, People and Capability
Transport and Main Roads