



Subject:
Date:



Toll Road Inquiry [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Friday, 29 June 2018 1:17:06 PM

UNCLASSIFIED

Good morning Ma'am,

After I received the email relating to the Toll Road Inquiry, I instantly had many thoughts regarding Tolls and Main Roads (Highways and Motorways) around the Brisbane area. Although I was hesitant that it would change anything, I wanted to have my say, even if it was just to pass on some ideas or "food for thought".

I grew up in a small country town and when I learnt to drive, I was taught that if I was in a 100km/hr zone then I should keep roughly 100 metres behind the car in front, unless I was planning to overtake when it was safe to do so. When I spent more time in bigger cities, I realised that so many people grew up driving on Motorways with up to 3 lanes or more beside them and all traffic doing 100km/hr or more, with less than 10 metres between cars in each lane. So instead of a couple of cars in a 100 metre radius on the roads I grew up with, there is 50 vehicles in a 100 metre radius on some roads, all moving faster with no reaction time if something goes wrong. I do understand that this is not so much of a problem (when everything is flowing smoothly), nor we can change it with the amount of people moving to big cities every year, especially Brisbane. My point is there is far more risk in Brisbane and big cities alike. Risk that requires mitigating as effectively and efficiently as possible.

I work at Enoggera on the North side of Brisbane and have done so for over 5 years now. I have lived in many cities in Australia (Including Sydney for 3 years) and spent considerable time in many countries, both on holiday and multiple operations throughout my 16 years of service in the Australian Army as a technical tradesman. After numerous years of managing maintenance and personnel, I am continually mitigating risk and have become very good at it. I also know that you can't fix something without knowing the "Root Cause". Although our public transport and Railway system is more expensive and far behind most cities, that is not what we are discussing and I believe has little to no impact on the reason our roads do not flow very well.

More recently I have continuously asked myself why I did not pursue a management position or study in the Civil Engineering sector (which is generally when I am stuck in traffic going home from work on a Friday afternoon). After seeing and knowing what I know now, I honestly believe that ours are some of the worst in the world. Why is it that we always think the problem with congestion on major roads in our cities is because there aren't enough lanes? Everyone thinks that way. The radio talks about it, people who call in to the radio stations talk about it, Government and parliament, even the Council and road workers believe that the roads aren't wide enough. The only solution I ever hear and see is the major roads getting an extra lane or two, that eventually has to go back to the original number of lanes prior to the improvements only a couple of kilometres down the road. The solutions rarely fix the "Root Cause" of the problems. From my experience and what I have seen in major Middle Eastern countries and cities like Kuwait and Dubai, through Europe and American cities, I realise our biggest problem.

It is not the Motorways and Highways themselves, it is the exits leaving them, and entries on

to the Motorways and Highways.

FOR EXAMPLE:

- All cars are travelling at 100 km/hr down any highway or motorway in Brisbane. Regardless of how many lanes there are, if the left lane is approaching an exit and the exit leaves the highway for 300 metres then has an intersection or red traffic light because of the other busy road that it connects to, how long will it take before all the vehicles exiting come to a stop and they all back up behind each other, stopping traffic on the motorway or highway in the lane they exited? Then all the traffic behind them in that lane slow to a stop. Then they try to merge in to the lanes next to them, then that lane slows until they are nearly stopped, then that lane of traffic try to merge again, and so on and so on. Then you have a significant bottle neck because an exit leaving the highway from 100 km/hr zone in to a 60 km/hr zone and then stops within 300 metres.
- It is the same with an entry on to a Motorway or Highway. Many vehicles at a time leave a 60 km/hr zone and in most cases less than 300 metres, all the cars coming on to the motorway is expected to merge in to a large amount of traffic flowing at 100 km/hr. What could go wrong? The lane the entry comes in to slow down. Because cars travel so close, they have to merge in to the next lane. Because they were going so slow, they slow that next lane down, and so on.

I have seen exits in major foreign cities that **FLOW**. They spend their money on exits and entries, not the highway itself. I have seen exits go for up to 2 km for busy highways. The only good example I can think of that we have is the Logan Motorway exit on to the commencement of the Gateway Motorway (North bound) Just south of the Mt Lindsay Highway. The exit has 2 lanes that goes for 1 km and there is NEVER any accidents or bottle necking or delays what so ever.

If we look at the worst case scenario (peak hour traffic) on major roads such as the Gateway Motorway, the Bruce Highway, the Centenary Highway, Logan Motorway, the M1 Pacific Highway and even the Legacy Way Motorway (which was only built a few years ago). How much money and time has been spent constantly improving, upgrading and building these roads? The Gateway is still getting millions of dollars in upgrades right now and I can't see that it will improve traffic **FLOW**.

If they injected all that time and money in to improving and extending EXITS and ENTRY points, I believe there would be a vast improvement in travel time for commuters especially in peak times. There will always be places that are difficult to achieve due to utilising the land available (spiralling exits around to join and flow on to other roads rather than an intersection or traffic lights). But this should be the primary priority, and if that can't be achieved then alternate planning to do the next best option.

I just feel that no one has actually thought of this and wanted to express my opinion.

TOLL ROADS

I only have a few suggestions / questions in regards to Toll Roads as follows:

- **Why are Tolls so expensive when they were originally designed to pay for the money spent to build or improve?**
- **Why do we pay when the Toll Road is slower than the alternate routes?**
- **There should be no Toll charge when there are so many road works or delays on a**

- particular Toll. That is just unfair and greedy.**
- **My wife and I live in Jimboomba and she works in Kedron in a clinic. The closest train station is at Springfield and would be pointless driving there, catching the train to central and then going out to a station that is still 20 mins walk from her work. If my wife travels the quickest way to her work, she drives down the Mt Lindsay Highway, on to the Logan Motorway and on to the Gateway Motorway North bound (2 tolls), then on to Legacy Way (another Toll) then exit to Kedron. That is a total of over \$10 each way. That is \$20 a day if she took that route!**

There are much larger cities in the world with far more traffic that do it better than us. I understand that some may have their issues, but what are we actually doing in preparation for the amount of people moving to Brisbane each year? We need to work smarter not harder. Look at the root cause and not just let companies spend government budgets and Toll revenue money on things that will not improve or effectively mitigate risk. Toll companies are surely committing extortion charging what they are (especially if there are constant road works and delays how are they allowed to charge Tolls) and if there is no foreseeable solution, the government should consider other avenues to take the pressure off those who have to use Tolls due to the poor infrastructure that we already have to deal with, that is only going to get worse as the population and development grows.

I apologise for the long winded, one sided discussion; however this topic is extremely frustrating which I guess is why there is an inquiry in the first place.

Hope it goes well as I am sure you have many other points, maybe more valid than mine.

Thank you for your time.

Kind regards,

Jason Richardson

[Redacted signature block]

[Redacted signature block]