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Date: 6 August 2018

Committee Secretary
Transport and Public Works Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

e: tpwc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

Moreton Bay Regional Council Submission: Inquiry into operations of toll roads in Queensland

Moreton Bay Regional Council (MBRC) would like to thank the Transport and Public Works Committee for the opportunity to provide a submission to its inquiry into the operations of toll roads in Queensland. We note the terms of reference for the inquiry are for the committee to inquire into and report to the Legislative Assembly on the operations of toll roads in Queensland and consider:

- a) *the operation of existing toll roads in South-East Queensland;*
- b) *toll pricing and incentive options to deliver better outcomes for Queenslanders;*
- c) *the operation of the existing complaint process and current statistics;*
- d) *possible measures to continue to improve customer service standards;*
- e) *the existing relationship between the Tolling Customer Ombudsman and the Queensland Ombudsman.*

Moreton Bay Regional Council would like to address items (a) and (b) of the above considerations.

Introduction

Moreton Bay Region (MBR) is one of the fastest developing regions in Queensland and Australia. The SEQ Regional Plan - *Shaping SEQ 2017*, which is the main planning instrument supported by State Planning Regulatory Provisions, identifies MBR as the third largest growth area after Brisbane and Gold Coast (Queensland Government 2017). The Shaping SEQ 2017 Plan also details specific corridors and areas of future population growth and sets direction of desired population density.

There are major residential and mixed use growth areas of MBR identified in the Plan as 'Major Expansion Areas' and 'Urban Corridors' along with a Principal Regional Activity Centre in Caboolture and a Priority Development Area in Petrie (refer to Figure 1):



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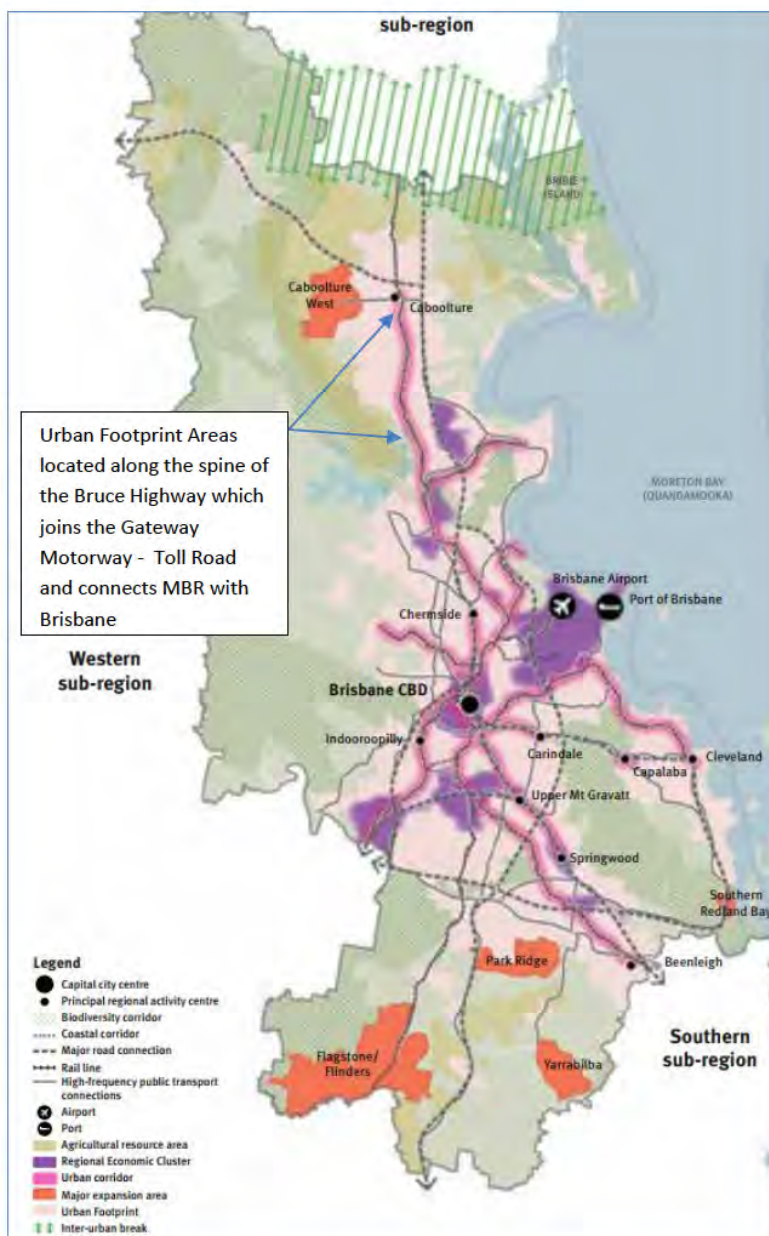


Figure 1. Extract from SEQ Regional Plan 2017 - Shaping SEQ, Figure 23.
Source: Queensland Government, accessed 26 July 2018
<https://dsdmipprd.blob.core.windows.net/general/shapingseq.pdf>

It can be seen in Figure 1 that the MBR 'urban footprint' growth areas are concentrated along the spine of the Bruce Highway which joins the Gateway Motorway - a toll road that connects the region with the Brisbane Region. In the case of Caboolture West 'major expansion' growth area,



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although it is not located adjacent to the highway, it will ultimately rely on the Gateway Motorway toll road for connecting with the Brisbane Region.

The region's proximity to Brisbane and major transport infrastructure has attracted numerous new residents and businesses. The region's strong economic performance provides competitively priced residential land and commercial sites and an array of business and investment opportunities.

In following the directions set by the State Government in Shaping SEQ 2017, MBRC wants to achieve greater levels of job self-containment, accommodate significant population growth and respond to a change in population demographics including community socio-economic, cultural and age profiles. Council's vision for transport strategy seeks to ensure a choice of high quality transport options making it easier to move people, goods and services to, from and within the region.

Currently, almost 92,000 (or 47%) of MBR's working residents leave the region every day to go to work. The biggest employment attractor outside of the region is the Brisbane City Council area (88,154 or 45.6% of working residents) followed by smaller numbers of residents attracted by the Sunshine Coast (2,064 or 1%) and Logan (978 or 0.5%) - refer to Figure 2.

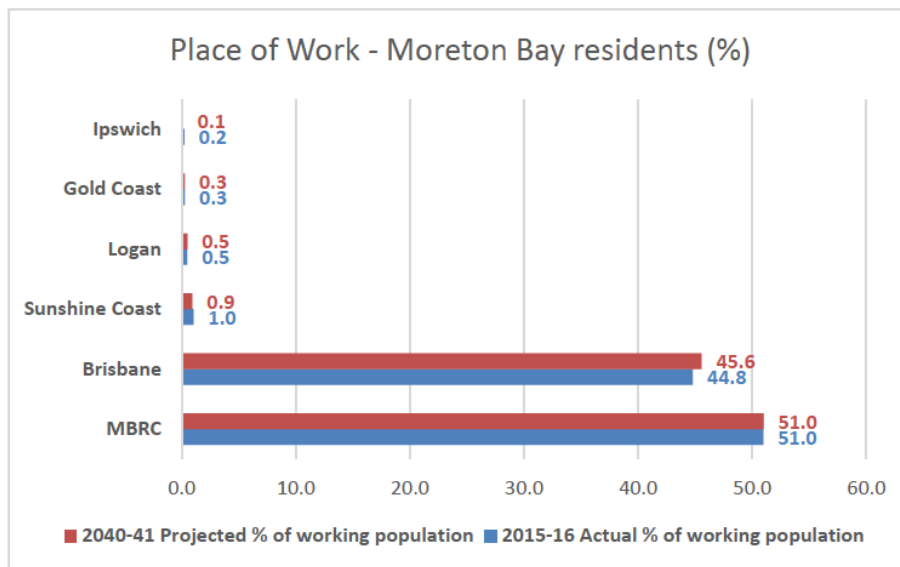


Figure 2. Place of Work Travel data for Moreton Bay, Regional employment projections 2010-11 to 2040-41. Source: Queensland Government Statistician's Office, accessed 26 July 2018. <http://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/products/tables/reg-employment-proj/index.php>

Figure 2 also shows a projected Place of Work travel data for 2041 horizon, noting that the number of MBR residents working in the Brisbane area is projected to increase slightly over time.

The Moreton Bay Community Plan sets a goal of increasing the number of residents working locally to 70% by 2031. Despite Council's commitment, however, a significant number of people

travel to other areas for employment and this trend is likely to continue until major improvements to public transport infrastructure are realised in the region and connectivity is significantly improved.

It is known that the clear majority of work-related commute in the Moreton Bay area is done by private vehicles (approximately 83%), while public transport only accounts for 9.1% - refer to Figure 3.

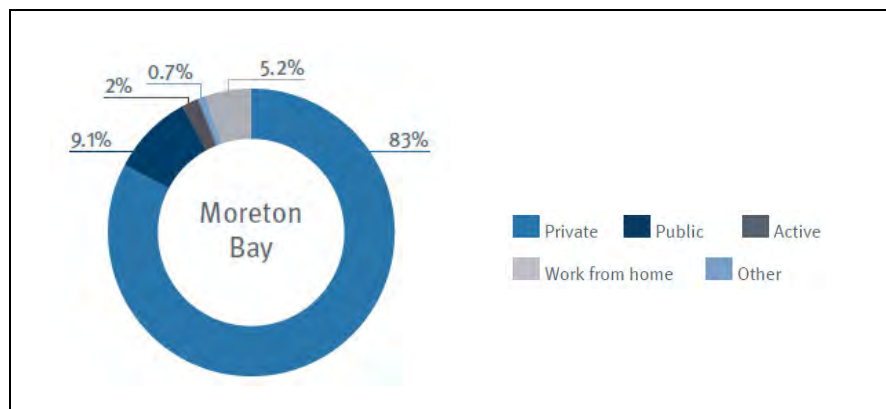


Figure 3. Moreton Bay mode share for journeys to work.
Source: ABS travel to work data, 2016.

In addition, even in more densely populated areas of Moreton Bay, the bus journey times are generally not comparable to private vehicle journey. Also, when comparing travel times, it is significantly easier to access most of the urbanised parts of Moreton Bay such as North Lakes, Mango Hill and Caboolture West by private vehicles.

In addition to the external work-related travel, people from other local government areas travel to MBR for employment. The biggest number of external workforce comes from the Brisbane City area (15,286 people), followed by Sunshine Coast (3,836 people). Consequently, there are about 103,500 people who travel between Moreton Bay and Brisbane City for employment on a working day. This is a significant number of commuters and given that approximately 83% travel by car, it will equate to around 86,000 people in cars using the road network to get to and from work.

Although there is a well-established network of roads connecting Brisbane and Moreton Bay areas, these roads suffer from peak hour congestion causing significant delays and affecting the entire surrounding network. The arterial (non-toll) roads that connect Brisbane and Moreton Bay areas generally traverse through the densely populated suburbs of Lawnton, Strathpine, Bracken Ridge, Bridgeman Downs, Carseldine, Aspley, Chermside, Kedron, Lutwyche, Everton Hills, Enoggera and Ashgrove. The peak hour traffic conditions in these areas are complicated by a mix of heavy vehicles, public transport buses, taxis, cyclists and private cars negotiating the commute through suburbia and the many school zones in the area. Generally, the drivers use toll-free roads as a first alternative despite the congestion, because they are free of charge. Many commuters, however, are forced to use toll roads as the travel time via arterial and sub-arterial road networks becomes prohibitively long due to traffic congestion, especially during peak hours. In a way, drivers who want to avoid the heavily congested roads do not have an alternative, but

to travel via toll roads to avoid congestion. Despite MBR's proximity to the Bruce Highway, drivers travelling south must use a toll road because there is no other toll-free highway, unlike the toll-free Pacific Motorway stretch between Brisbane and Gold Coast (refer to Figure 4).



Figure 4. Extract from SEQ Regional Plan 2017 - Shaping SEQ, Map 4b - Strategic road and freight system 2041, showing major toll road connection (in red colour) as an 'existing freight corridor'.

Source: Queensland Government, accessed 26 July 2018.

<https://dsdmipprd.blob.core.windows.net/general/shapingseq.pdf>



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A. Operation of existing toll roads in South-East Queensland

1. Toll roads are a useful tool for managing demand for transport and providing alternative funding mechanisms for building road infrastructure. Planning for toll roads should be aligned with strategic urban and regional development planning as well as strategic metropolitan transport planning.
2. The existing toll roads in SEQ are currently under-utilised, operating predominantly at levels below their existing traffic capacity in both peak and off peak periods. This puts even more pressure on toll-free roads that already experience significant congestion issues. Population growth in the region would most likely exacerbate congestion issues and add to the overall cost of congestion to the local economy. Consequently, it can be concluded that the operations and performance of toll roads have a significant impact on the performance of the MBRC-controlled road network and the networks controlled by other councils in the SEQ Metropolitan Area.
3. Preferably, tolls should be placed on roads that lead to congested areas and parts of the network such as the Brisbane CBD, and not on roads that bypass the inner city.
4. Providing a toll-free alternative to toll roads is highly valued by road users.
5. Introduction of a distance-based charging scheme for all roads across Australia in the future has potential to further complicate the operation of toll roads.
6. Having a toll operator monopoly poses significant risks to the operation of toll roads and to the future of transport planning in the region.
7. Toll road operator administration fees should be reasonable (lower) and cost recovery based.

B. Toll pricing and incentive options to deliver better outcomes for Queenslanders

1. Cost of toll roads affects usage and should be lowered to achieve a large percentage of capacity utilisation.
2. Setting the level of toll should be a policy driven decision and not a commercial one.
3. In setting the toll, it is critical to ensure that toll roads offer value for money for the users.
4. The current pricing system does not offer users a wide range of options.
5. Pricing options and other incentives are necessary to attract more regular users. A paper by Transurban (Mark Richard, Christopher Zito, Darryn Paterson), presented at the 2017 Australian Institute of Traffic Planning and Management National Conference, cites that 73.2% of all vehicles that travelled on one Transurban motorway in 2015 made 20 or fewer trips.
6. Several other options should be explored to enhance the benefits of toll roads to the transport system. Such options include:



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- a. Discounts for frequent use. Monthly or yearly passes for unlimited trips could be used to promote toll road use among daily commuters.
- b. Demand based pricing. Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Sydney Harbour Tunnel are toll roads with toll fees which vary by time of day and only in one direction, southbound into the CBD.
- c. High occupancy vehicle discounts. This would further address congestion issues by encouraging more efficient ways of travel such as carpooling.
- d. More options for heavy vehicles. Currently there is no distinction between general access heavy vehicles (i.e. Large Rigid Trucks and Semi-Trailers) and restricted access vehicles (B-doubles and PBS 2B).
- e. More options for utility vehicles. There needs to be a distinction for non-commercial use of utility vehicles. Currently all motor vehicles that are registered for commercial use and: (i) are two-axle rigid trucks or load carrying vans or utilities, having a gross vehicle mass greater than 1.5 tonnes but not exceeding 4.5 tonnes, or (ii) have spatial dimensions which are substantially consistent with the criteria in (i) above are classified as Class 3 for tolling purposes and pay one and a half times the fee for using toll roads as Class 1 cars do. Use of utilities in rural areas and among MBRC residents is widespread and trips using a utility are not always for a commercial purpose.
- f. Motorcycles are also disproportionately charged. Currently motorcycles pay half the fee of cars while they take up less than half the road space that cars do:

Greater use of motorcycles generates multiple benefits. This includes reducing traffic congestion as well as fuel consumption and thus greenhouse gas emissions. Motorcycles are a space-saving, convenient and lower-cost alternative to private cars, and are well suited to the municipality's inner urban areas.

Source: <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/motorcycle-plan-2015-18.doc>

With the introduction of lane filtering (motorcycles passing alongside stationary and slow moving motor vehicles to progress towards the front of traffic queues) motorcycles have a potential to reduce congestion and road wear. As illustrated by a 2011 Belgian study, a shift from cars to motorcycles can increase road network capacity and benefit all road users (*Commuting by Motorcycle: Impact Analysis*, I. Yperman, Transport and Mobility Leuven, Brussels, September 2011).

Moreton Bay Regional Council appreciates the opportunity to provide input into the parliamentary inquiry into the operations of toll roads in Queensland.



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Should you require any further information, please contact Mr Syd Jerram, Manager Integrated Transport Planning, on [REDACTED]

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Syd Jerram".

Syd Jerram
Manager Integrated Transport Planning
Engineering, Construction and Maintenance

Sources of information:

- <http://abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/2901.0Chapter41002016>
- <http://statements.qld.gov.au/Statement/2018/6/13/palaszczuk-government-commits-to-road-tolling-inquiry>
- <https://www.linkt.com.au/brisbane/using-toll-roads/about-brisbane-toll-roads/toll-pricing>
- <https://www.aitpm.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/How-many-times-Mark-Richard-Christopher-Zito-Darryn-Paterson.pdf>
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- <https://www.choice.com.au/transport/cars/fines/articles/road-toll-costs-and-fines>
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