

29th June 2020

The Secretary
Economy and Infrastructure Committee
Parliament House, Spring Street
East Melbourne VIC 3002

To the Secretary,

Re: Submission to Inquiry into the increase in Victoria's Road Toll in 2019

Thank-you for the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry.

I would firstly like to submit that an increasing road toll is a natural consequence of rapid unsustainable population growth, especially in a city where the planning system has been corrupted by developers and lobby groups with vested interests.

As a resident of the City of Moreland, home to the first developments by Nightingale – The Commons and the Nightingale-1 – and a submitter to the Planning Scheme Amendment Moreland C183, I have observed first-hand just how corrupted and bizarre the planning system in Melbourne is.

An element of the Green brigade want rapid population growth, merely so that Nightingale can license and spread it's business model around Melbourne, and lobby for increased cycling and pedestrian transport infrastructure.

Perhaps this Inquiry should consider the discussion of VCAT 1615 Chaucer Enterprises Pty Ltd v Moreland City Council (Oct 2015) – what is the issue? - the true issue is not reduction but waiver or reduction to nothing.

I think that expecting to reduce the road toll in an environment of rapid increased population growth is not a sound proposition. To be working towards zero is ideological. Even to be working towards a goal of below 200 by 2020 is ideological and politically-driven.

It is not the way that public agencies should be used by the politicians of the day.

In 2014 the Victorian Labor Platform made a commitment to reduce deaths to below 200 by 2020 – why are public sector agencies being used to fulfil a commitment of a political party?

This is the opposite of good governance.

Public sector agencies should be providing impartial advice and evidence in order to set realistic targets and realistic programs to achieve those targets.

This appears to be a corruption of the public service.

*Underpinning the Safe System is the fundamental principle that road safety is a shared responsibility across all levels of government, regulators, communities and **individuals**.*

Yet during the pre-election campaign for the 2018 State election, the Victorian Labor Party made election promises to the tune of billions of dollars – commitments based not on creating a safe, well-ordered city, but rather commitments that were politically-motivated to win key seats and increase the majority of the government.

In the electorate of Pascoe Vale, the Labor MP Lizzie Blandthorn promised an extraordinary 12 million for a roundabout in Coburg North on Sussex Street, an extraordinary amount of money for just one roundabout.

The Moreland Planning Scheme Clause 43.02 Schedule 24 has a DDO for neighbourhood centres that shows in Figure 9 that the properties directly facing that roundabout are all marked as focus areas for change.

Overdevelopment is targetted for exactly the area where road safety is already a big issue.

This is nonsensical, and betrays the idea that the Victorian Govt is serious about zero road deaths.

The State Planning Policy Framework Clause 18.02-3S Road System demonstrates that public sector agencies and entities should be prioritising consideration to the Victorian Planning Scheme, and the many facets of Transport under Clause 18 rather than to Victorian Labor Party Platform goals

The road system is just one part of the transport system, and the wider goal to integrate land use and transport planning to deliver net community benefit (VPP Clause 71.02-3).

The Towards Zero Road Safety Strategy 2016-2020 is a political document.

It should be abandoned, and public sector agencies should instead strive towards the objectives of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and numerous other pieces of legislation, that all aspire to deliver fair and orderly planning objectives.

“The target of reducing deaths to below 200 by 2020 was articulated in the Victorian Labor Platform in 2014. In order to deliver on this commitment, the current road safety strategy was based on the elements of road trauma contributing to fatal and serious injuries and independent modelling of a range of counter-measures that were predicted to meet the Government’s target. Ambitious targets have the added benefit of focussing Government agencies on delivering the interventions that have the greatest impact.” (source submission 71 by Dept of Transport)

Ordinary Victorians do not need “ambitious targets”. We need reality, good solid science, sensible planning authorities, and a credible trustworthy public sector.

The Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019 has important values to be considered in the next Road Safety Strategy

Part 7 and 8 of the Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019 made various amendments and additions including a statement of values for Members of Parliament:

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT (STANDARDS) ACT 1978 - SECT 4

Statement of Values

Members should demonstrate the following values in carrying out their public duties ---

- (a) serving the public interest;
- (b) upholding democracy;
- (c) integrity;
- d) accountability;
- (e) respect for the diversity of views and backgrounds within the Victorian community;
- (f) diligence;
- (g) leadership.

Pt I (Heading and s.3) substituted as Pt 3 (Heading and ss5-16) by No.5/2019 s.77.

The Towards Zero Road Safety Strategy 2016-2020 is a fairy-tale

The Road Safety Strategy is about creating a safe system for all Victorians – this means safe roads and roadsides, safe speeds, safe vehicles and safe road use by all people using the road.

False promises and false advertising.

It is not realistic or feasible to create a safe system for all Victorians.

Life is not “safe” - life has many risks. Travelling on the roads is one of those many risks. Balancing those risks and the many conflicting objectives of planning in favour of net community benefit and sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations is what is set down in the Planning Scheme.

Choosing to continue to promote the idea that the Government will make the transport system “safe” for all Victorians, subsequent to the adoption of the Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019 is not in the spirit of that Act.

How does a projected population figure of 8.4 million people for Melbourne align with Road Safety goals?

Norway has one of the lowest rates of deaths from road accidents, yet it has a population of 5 million for the entire country – Melbourne is already at 5 million.

How many other countries or cities in the world have successfully lowered their road toll whilst simultaneously having one of the highest rates of population increase in the world?

I would respectfully suggest that it is a little bit insulting to the average Victorian to promote a Towards Zero Road Strategy.

The public is aware of the level of corruption in politics.

There is no consideration of other social outcomes of Road Safety Strategies and the reliance on heavy-handed penalties

Victoria is a highly regulated jurisdiction.

Ironically Victorian Labor Party MP's see no problem with branch-stacking, a practice that has continued unabated for 40 years or more.

Yet the ordinary Victorian gets slugged with heavy penalties for numerous misdemeanours, which adds greatly to the cost of living and to every day stress.

This is not achieving a satisfactory quality of life for average Victorians.

The theory of the Department of Transport that “one life lost on Victorian roads is one too many” needs to be questioned. It appears to be an opinion formulated from a position of privilege. Perhaps it is also designed in the interests of Nightingale or traffic planners or other developers.

An example of another fairy tale is the Moreland Integrated Transport Strategy 2019 which was lauded by it's creator as a significant milestone in the future of transport planning for not only Moreland, but for Melbourne

The Planning Panels Victoria Report on the Moreland C183 amendment which sought to implement the Moreland Integrated Transport Strategy and Parking Plan into the Planning Scheme was a scathing indictment on the lack of evidence and the ideological basis of the whole project.

Ideological aspirations vs strategic justification.

There was no mapping, land-use surveying or other evidence to support the Transport Strategy that was 18 months in the making. It was fraudulent.

If major transport planners are having to use deception and fraud to create Transport Strategies to theoretically accommodate the population projections in Plan Melbourne 2017, then it is time to stop and investigate the participants in the planning system.

The Planning system in Melbourne has been seriously corrupted by the Nightingale idea, let alone other developers, traffic engineers etc etc.

That may have been an acceptable situation prior to the Improving Parliamentary Standards Act of 2019. However now that Members of Parliament and Public Sector Executives have the privilege of an Independent Remuneration Tribunal that awards them generous pay rises even during a pandemic such as Covid-19, then I would like to make a suggestion that community standards and community expectations should take higher priority than the vested interests of private business.

Finally I would like to see the abandonment of Towards Zero and the development of a realistic Road Safety Strategy that balances conflicting objectives

In doing so I would also like to suggest that the Victorian Government and public service needs to first consider the sustainable population-carrying capacity of Victoria and/or Australia, particularly with respect to biodiversity and climate-change risks.

A recommended foundational document for this is a report by the House of Representatives Standing Committee for Long-term strategies in December 1994, entitled "Australia's Population 'Carrying Capacity': One Nation-Two Ecologies" (ISBN 0644355565).

Thank-you in advance for consideration of my submission.

Yours faithfully,

Marion Attwater

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