



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release: Tuesday, 31 March 2009

STATE GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT TO BUILD 'TOLL FREE' BYPASS IS WELCOME NEWS

Frankston City Council has welcomed the State Government announcement to seek expressions of interest for the toll-free Peninsula Link, to ensure the project starts by the end of the year.

Mayor, Councillor Colin Hampton, who attended this morning's announcement (31 March 2009), made by Premier John Brumby, said Council has strongly advocated for the construction of the Peninsula Link. "This project is critical to the south-east region, allowing for better access to Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula, and alleviating congestion at the end of the Frankston Freeway, which has been exacerbated by the opening of Eastlink," he said.

"The Peninsula Link project will not only deliver a vital new transport link for Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs, but provide thousands of direct jobs and significant economic stimulus for the state and national economy – critical as we steer our way through the current global financial crisis."

"Council – and our community – have always had a very strong expectation that this project will not be tolled. We have made our position on this issue very clear and I'm a glad the State Government has listened," Cr Hampton added

Roads Minister, Tim Pallas, said the State Government was proposing to have the project delivered under an Availability Public Private Partnership (PPP). The availability PPP model will ensure the road remained toll-free while harnessing the benefits of private sector involvement, including faster delivery and the use of innovative construction techniques similar to those on EastLink, he explained.

"Under this model, the Government will make periodic payments to a private company based on key performance indicators – the model is not based on traffic usage and instead seeks the greatest road performance for the community with the best value for money," he said.

Mr Pallas said the EOI release meant early works on the project would commence at the project's Lathams Road overpass, with the main contractor expected to be on the ground by the end of the year and the project to be completed by early 2013.

Once completed, Peninsula Link will reduce travel times between Carrum Downs and Mt Martha to around 17 minutes – a saving of up to 40 minutes. In addition a cycling and walking path will be built along the freeway, providing new recreational opportunities for residents and visitors to the region.

Mr Pallas said the Environment Effects Statement (EES) for Peninsula Link was an important process that required completion before construction starts. "The outcomes of the EES are anticipated around the middle of this year and will determine the range of social and environmental mitigation measures in the final project."

Cr Hampton added: "Frankston City Council is fully supportive of construction of a Frankston Bypass that minimises environmental disruption in the municipality."

For more information about Peninsula Link, SEITA's preferred option and the EES process, go to www.seita.com.au.

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PLEASE NOTE:

Frankston City Mayor, Councillor Colin Hampton, is available to discuss this matter with the media on 0400 236 109.