12 September 2019

To the Independent Advisory Committee
regarding NELP Alternative Lower Plenty Road Interchange

Following my presentation to IAC on Wednesday 4 September, Mr Nick Wimbush asked if I had viewed the NELP alternative design for the Lower Plenty Road Interchange. He referred me to Document 101 in the Tabled Documents. I thank you for the opportunity to provide additional comments. I have since looked at the design and provide my thoughts briefly as follows:

Given NELPs traffic modelling has been questioned in the reference design I would expect similar issues regarding traffic modelling used in the Lower Plenty Road alternate design and this modelling should be independently assessed.

It is extremely unlikely that local traffic would ever utilize the north bound NEL ramp at the Lower Plenty Rd interchange be it off Lower Plenty Road or Erskine Road. It barely takes 10 minutes to get to the M80 from Erskine Rd and most locals would prefer the few extra minutes driving to paying a toll. I would also argue that cars coming from further away would not use the north ramp for the same reason. By the time cars are at the Lower Plenty Road interchange they are close enough to the M80 to continue driving toll free along Greensborough Rd.

Some locals will utilize the southbound NEL ramp. However, I think it likely they would be more than happy to drive north to Grimshaw St to get on a south bound ramp if it meant the extremely important and much loved Simpson Army Barracks would be retained and that trucks, traffic and air pollution would be minimized in the local area.

The alternate design places the interchange at a large intersection with Erskine Road. I fail to see how this in any way would deter traffic or trucks from utilizing Erskine Rd. Rather, it appears to establish Erskine Rd as a main road and a link to La Trobe University. Erskine Rd is completely unsuitable for trucks or any significant increase in traffic. It is a narrow road and standing on the refuge median at Munro St while cars pass on either side will give a clear indication of this. Additionally, traffic will regularly come to a standstill and back up Erskine Rd from Carwarp St due to the level crossing at Rosanna Parklands on Carwarp Street.

Access to La Trobe University would be better served by a NEL exit at Grimshaw Street, where traffic can travel west along Grimshaw Street (2 lanes in both directions), then south along Plenty Road (3 lanes in both directions). These are major roads and much more suitable to accommodating an increase in traffic that includes trucks. Improved access to La Trobe University locally (MacLeod and Rosanna) would be best served by improved public transport.
Both interchange designs are land intensive and will increase traffic on local roads, severely degrade livability in the area, destroy wildlife habitat and put human health and the local environment at risk. The negative impacts of the interchange on the local community far outweigh the benefits to the project proposed by NELP.

Regards
Emily Telford