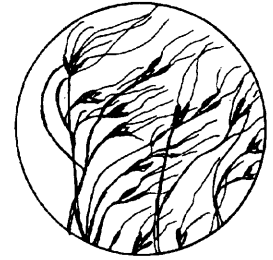


BUSH NEWS

from the Natural Areas of Kedron Brook & Environs



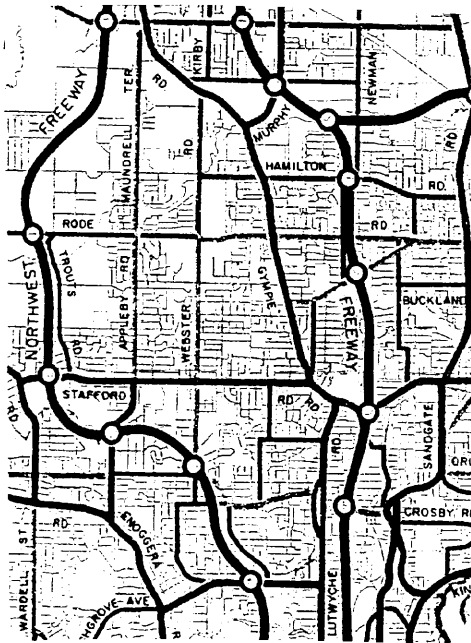
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GreenBrook Association

BEWARE THE CITY VALLEY BYPASS

The colossal roadworks currently underway on the Gold Coast Highway are of a scale that can be compared with only two other previous projects - the south-east freeway and riverside expressway.

Both of these were originally proposed by an American consultant, Wilber Smith, in 1965. Also proposed were a Central freeway running from the Normanby to the Royal Brisbane Hospital, and a North-west freeway (original route illustrated below).



Part of the Central freeway has now been reconstituted as the City/Valley Bypass. If this proceeds immediately after the Coast road upgrade, it will usher in a new round of freeway-building in Brisbane. If the north

-west freeway is to be stopped, it must be stopped now, and there are good reasons why neither freeway should be built.

How it all started

In 1954, President Eisenhower proposed "a grand plan for a properly articulated highway system", and thereby ushered in the age of the freeway.

The idea was that these "magic motorways" would make congestion a thing of the past. Eisenhower also realised that it could stimulate the economy: "if you build a road, you make it possible for more automobiles to be used, and more oil and gas is used, and more hot dog stands are built along the road" (1961).

A change in thinking

By the mid 60's it had become obvious that more roads encourage more cars. The huge investment in freeways also starved the public transport system, resulting in rail patronage in the United States falling by two-thirds between 1950 and 1970.

In 1968 the US Department of Transport released a report which summarised the situation:

There is an absorptive capacity of a city for cars, just as there is of a building for occupants. This is determined by the capacity of all the streets together. When it is exceeded, health and safety as well as environmental quality are jeopardised, and the number of cars must be limited.

Concern grew among voters and officials. One transport planner was quoted in 1968 exclaiming that eventually "the whole damned country will probably be paved over".

So a moratorium on freeway construction came to pass. In 1970 the governor of Massachusetts explained it this way:

Four years ago, I was the Commissioner of the Department of Public Works .. our road building agency. Then, nearly everyone was sure highways were the only answer to transportation problems for years to come. But we were wrong.

And closing freeways has the opposite effect, as reported last year in *New Scientist*:

London's Hammersmith Bridge has been closed to all traffic ... since 1977 (because of strength concerns). London Transport surveyed people using the bridge ... before it closed, and were able to contact the same individuals in the following weeks. Of the commuters who drove to work across the bridge, 21% no longer drove to work. Again, congestion in neighbouring streets has not markedly increased.

On with the show - the City/Valley Bypass

The City/Valley bypass involves six lanes extending from Hale St near the Normanby, through Victoria Park alongside Gilchrist Ave and disappearing into a tunnel under the Exhibition Grounds beside the hospital. It will connect to Kingsford Smith Dve at Breakfast Creek with an offshoot to Bowen Bridge Rd further north.

Consultation and information

Managing public opinion has always been an important goal of governments and large corporations. Unfortunately, this is often done through half-truths, no-truths and snow-truths..

For example, way back in 1939, a World Fair General Motors exhibit promised that freeways would bring to cities "abundant sunshine", "fresh air" and "fine green parkways".

Another classic example occurred during the City/Valley bypass study.

Lying directly in the path of the proposed bypass is York's Hollow, a strip of land which contains a lagoon and is known to have been an aboriginal camp site. This appears to have been brought to the consultant's attention during the consultation phase.

When the consultants announced that the preferred route would bury the waterhole and most of the surrounding land under 6 lanes of road, they also recommended that "a management plan be prepared for this park which will ... give due regard to the cultural significance of York's Hollow"!

And the BCC accepted this report.

Implications for Kedron Brook

The Main Roads Department in Queensland operates on a 'divide and conquer' basis. But in this case it is clear; approval for the City/Valley bypass will grant de facto approval for the north-west freeway.

The route of least controversy is through Grinstead park on the alignment proposed in 1965.

This will remove the last stand of

old-growth eucalypts along the whole of the Brook. It will also be the end of the flying fox camp.

But it will be more than that. It will mean constant noise - worse than we have now. It will mean faster traffic and more danger crossing roads. It will mean dirtier air. And finally, it will mean more congestion.

Conclusions

That this is so is now formally acknowledged by our governments. In August 1998, the Queensland Govt and the BCC released the following statement:

The greatest single threat to Brisbane's livability comes from the growth in traffic on our roads ... by the year 2011 there will be another half million cars on our roads.

This is, at least, a good start.

But why do they persist in building more roads ahead of other solutions?

Why are we offered freeways, when it was known three decades ago that they do not work, and simply cause more congestion?

Frank Box

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THE LAST ISSUE

This is the 10th anniversary, and the 40th issue, of *Bush News*. It is also the last issue.

The goal of *Bush News* has been to draw attention to the many creatures who share our living space. Sadly some of these have disappeared over the last decade. Whether others will follow depends on how we manage that space; the choice is ours.

We would like to thank those who provided their time to deliver *Bush News*, and especially to our sponsors, Jenny & Bruce Perrott and Jeni & Rob Neary.

Working bees will continue to be held on the third Sunday of each month except for June and December.

Bob Devine

PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

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