



# Minister for Public Transport Minister for Roads

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Ms Danielle Green MP  
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Dear Ms Green

## **EPPING ROAD PROJECT, BUS SERVICES AND THE O'HEARNS ROAD - HUME FREEWAY INTERCHANGE**

I refer to the petitions tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 13 December 2012, regarding bus services, the Epping Road Project and funding for the O'Herns Road – Hume Freeway Interchange.

An extract of the petitions lodged by you in relation to these matters on 13 December 2012, in the Legislative Assembly, has been provided to me.

The Victorian Coalition Government is delivering on its commitment to develop a new Metropolitan Planning Strategy to identify and accommodate population growth and demographic change, transport and infrastructure needs, employment locations, social and community needs and the tools required to manage growth.

The Coalition Government recognises the development needs of the Epping area and the need for transport infrastructure to facilitate such development. The Coalition Government has confirmed budget funding of \$7.5 million to widen Cooper Street between Edgars Road and the Hume Freeway. This project will improve travel times on this key east-west route and provide better access for the community and industry to the new Melbourne Markets. Construction is scheduled to be completed in late 2013.

In relation to bus service changes in the Whittlesea area, Public Transport Victoria has advised me that the extension of the railway line to South Morang on 22 April 2012 brought about changes to travel patterns, with bus routes being adjusted to reflect that change. The opening of the rail extension was a major step forward in improving public transport in Melbourne's growing northern suburbs.

A number of changes were introduced into the Mill Park and South Morang areas, including the following:

- Route 562 was altered to operate from Whittlesea to Northland, operating along main roads to provide a direct bus connecting Whittlesea, Mernda, Mill Park and Bundoora to the new station at South Morang.
- Route 564 was split into two routes, these being 564 (Bundoora – South Morang) and 569 (South Morang – Epping). This change aims to minimise any potential confusion as to which bus to catch in the overlapping section of the route in Morang Drive. A feature of these timetables is that Route 564 trips link to 569 trips, and vice versa. This ensures passengers can still travel to and from Epping and Bundoora without the need to change buses.

- Route 573 was introduced to provide increased coverage in Mill Park Lakes, a growing area that had not had a bus route prior to the changes being introduced.
- Route 563 was removed to reduce duplication with SmartBus Route 901 between South Morang and Greensborough. These resources were reallocated to allow for improvements to Route 562.
- Route 571 was removed as it was temporary to provide a connection for South Morang residents to trains at Epping until South Morang station was opened.

Public Transport Victoria conducted market research that showed a preference for simple to understand, direct bus routes. Also, passenger surveys of SmartBus Route 901 users found that the main reason people used the bus was that the route was direct and convenient. In making changes in the Mill Park and South Morang area, Public Transport Victoria has responded to these market demands and introduced bus routes which are more direct.

VicRoads has advised me that the recently completed strategic transport modelling for the Northern Growth Corridor indicated that beyond 2046, with ultimate development, there is a need for the O'Herns Road interchange, the O'Herns Road duplication and the Edgars Road extension. Further work on these matters will assist in determining the relative priority of these proposals in the context of other competing priorities and determine the desirable timing of these initiatives.

VicRoads is also continuing to identify requirements for the duplication of Epping Road between Memorial Avenue and Findon Road. Duplication of this section of Epping Road includes the replacement of the Findon Road roundabout with traffic signals.

Yours sincerely



**Hon Terry Mulder MP**  
Minister for Roads

4 / 2 / 2013