

OUR REF: 2072738

FOR ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT:
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House of representatives Standing Committee on Economics, Finance and Public Administration	
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The Secretary
Standing Committee on Economics, Finance and Public Administration
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

Late submission to Fed Govt Enquiry into Cost Shifting

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to this inquiry into Local Government and Cost Shifting.

Whilst Toowoomba City Council has identified several current areas of concern, or trends which indicate a potential increase in cost and effort on the part of Council, we are directing this response to one emerging area of concern ie increased responsibilities related to heavy haulage transport through our City. One particular example is documented for your consideration.

Details of our concerns relating to:

- ❖ Building Certification,
- ❖ Traffic Operations maintenance,
- ❖ Health Services,
- ❖ Water Supply and Water Re-use, and
- ❖ Environmental Protection

have already been forwarded to the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) for inclusion in the LGAQ submission.

Yours faithfully

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In 2000, at the Local Government Association of Queensland's Annual Conference, Toowoomba City Council raised the issue of parking facilities for road trains, with the following motion:

That the Local Government Association of Queensland request the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads to investigate the provision of parking facilities adjacent to Road Train Routes on the outskirts of towns, so as to allow transport operators to uncouple and park trailers prior to proceeding into non-road train areas, in close co-operation with the respective local government.

This issue was raised at the Conference, as for many years, Council had been receiving complaints regarding heavy vehicles using local roads. Issues included the routes used by heavy vehicles, road safety, damage to infrastructure, noise, and overnight/extended periods of parking. Current anecdotal evidence indicates that the situation has not changed in the intervening years, and perhaps has widened in the geographical areas affected by the need for heavy haulage operators to park their vehicles and trailers.

Longer and/or heavier vehicles have been introduced to the road network, for example road trains, B-Doubles and excess mass vehicles under Queensland Transport's Mass Export Management Scheme concessions. In the economic interests of the city, Council has approved routes for those vehicles which, although restricted in an as-of-right sense generally to the declared road network, must necessarily branch onto numbers of local roads to access the required depots and destinations serviced by those heavy vehicles.

These local roads are frequently not constructed to geometric or structural design standards suitable for regular heavy vehicle movements. Increasing usage of these routes invariably results in calls for improvements to infrastructure, such as: intersection treatments to improve safety and/or geometrically accommodate longer vehicle movements (eg Bridge/West Streets intersection project), pavement strengthening to overcome deterioration accelerated by increased heavy vehicle loadings (eg reduction in pavement life on Boundary Street), widening narrow lanes at signalised intersections (three intersections along West Street north of the Warrego Highway are inadequate for the passage of B-Doubles including fuel tankers), slip lanes, and so on.

As-of-right road train routes have been extended by the Main Roads Department into Toowoomba from the west and the south. However, road train routes are not possible down the existing range crossing to the east, and this has resulted in numbers of these vehicles being broken down within the city limits. Trailers and bogeys are being left unattended in a manner which is potentially dangerous for other road users, and which generates complaints from property owners and business operators in the area.

To address one particular location of concern, Toowoomba City Council has agreed to fund half of the \$140,000 estimated cost of a project to provide a 350m long indented parking bay for road-train break-down at Condamine Street. This project will allow trailers to be parked safely clear of the through carriageways in this industrial street. The other half of this project is to be funded by the Main Roads Department, with the express wish of Council being that this funding NOT be to the detriment of subsidies which would otherwise be forthcoming for projects in Toowoomba.

Whilst no formal advice has been received to date from the Department regarding the Condamine Street project, it is understood that its contribution will be funded by way of reallocating funding under its Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme, which would otherwise have funded other road-related projects (for example, intersection safety treatments, cycleways, School Safe and school parking facilities) for the Toowoomba community.

If this project proceeds as anticipated, then in effect, the Toowoomba community will be fully funding the cost of works to treat the socially unacceptable consequence of the decision by the Main Roads Department to extend as-of-right road train routes into Toowoomba.

A response from the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads to the motion tabled at the LGAQ Conference (November 2000) indicated his support for collaborative discussions to determine the extent of the problem, and to investigate possible solutions. He also indicated that any preferred remedial action would best be taken by local government in conjunction with local industry – a continuance of the current situation. Responsibility for financial relief was not addressed in his response.