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15 February 2006

The Secretary
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir

**SUBMISSION ON INQUIRY INTO FUTURE OIL SUPPLY AND
ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORT FUELS**

The City of Wanneroo has the following comments in respect to items c) and d) of the terms of reference of the above Inquiry:

- Item c) of terms of reference
The City of Wanneroo comprises the majority of the north west urban growth corridor of the Perth metropolitan region. It presently has a population of approximately 110,000 persons and this is forecast to double by 2021. Like all Australian cities, the vast majority of journeys made in Perth (including the City of Wanneroo) are made by private car. Continuing rises in the price of fuel will therefore mean a greater proportion of household income being used on private car use.

In the City of Wanneroo, there are many households who are currently struggling to make ends meet. Having to spend more on transportation requirements will mean less household income available for meeting other needs. This can include basic things such as adequate food, clothing, health, education and access to employment.

Much of this City is 'mortgage belt' where many families are already struggling to meet home loan repayments. Any possible interest rate rises already present great risks to many home buyers on the margin, and continuing increases in transport costs arising from fuel price increases present real difficulties for these people.

Unlike most eastern States cities, the residential property market in Perth is continuing to grow at a rapid rate. This is making it increasingly difficult for people to buy a home, and increasing fuel costs compounds this.

Private house rents are also increasing rapidly which has been placing increasing demands upon households who are in this form of housing. Increasing fuel costs presents a particular difficulty for this group.

The brief overview presented above should make it clear that increasing fuel costs will present real financial and social difficulties for many people, particularly those who are already struggling to make ends meet. This will require increasing levels of assistance for these people and this will mean significant demands upon all levels of government.

- Item d) of terms of reference
One of the obvious ways that demands can be reduced on transport fuels (as well as assisting to address many of the problems foreseen above) is to significantly increase the level of service provided by public transport systems.

In the City of Wanneroo, we have a northern suburbs railway which presently goes as far north as the Clarkson railway station for passenger services. While the land has been set aside for its northern extension as far as Jindalee (about 7km to the north) and planning for future urban areas to the north of Jindalee are also making provision for the railway's future northern extension, the State Government to-date has made no commitment to construct the railway beyond Clarkson.

In the meantime, a substantial (and rapidly growing) urban population exists between Clarkson and Jindalee. Due to the absence of the railway in this area, conventional low density, single residential housing types are tending to predominate, rather than a more diverse mix of housing (including higher densities) which would have more chance of being attractive to the market if the railway had been in place. A more diverse housing mix would be more supportive of public transit use.

The travel patterns which are being established through this area are also ones typical of reliance on private vehicle use, rather than making greater use of public transport.

It may be concluded from the above that a clear option and opportunity for reducing transport fuel demands in the case of this City is to expedite the northern extension of the northern suburbs railway.

Such an approach is supported, in general terms, by the findings of the recent House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Heritage report "Sustainable Cities" (August 2005), and also by the report prepared by Jago Dodson and Neil Sipe, "Oil Vulnerability in the Australian City" (Griffith University, Urban Research Program, Research Paper 6, December 2005).

The Western Australian Government is currently preparing a State Infrastructure Strategy and this City is making a strong submission to the agency managing that project, arguing for the inclusion in that Strategy of the northern railway extension as soon as possible.

This City would appreciate any assistance your Inquiry can provide toward addressing the issues raised above, and particularly to the project involving prompt extension of the northern suburbs railway.

Please let me know if you require any further information on any of the matters covered above.

Yours faithfully

Charles Johnson
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER