

Introduction to Document 2 tabled at Council meeting May 27.

I started on this quest to query why more wasn't being done to Swinstone St to improve the road instead of just traffic smoothing the existing road. I later learned that council had applied for funding specifically to address the issues of Townsend and Swinstone Street being a black spot. It still hasn't addressed the issue of the dog leg, where a vehicle turning right from Read Street into Swinstone being written off, demolishing a solid, wide brick letter box which featured an ornamental letter box. Without the letter box, the car would have crashed into a house.

I queried why Seabrook Avenue is being used as a short cut for vehicles from Safety Bay from Rae Rd when logic would suggest, *ceteris paribus*, driving to Read Street and turning left to proceed to Paterson Road to go to Perth or the foreshore.

After posting my thoughts in several Facebook chat groups, many other issues were raised and some solutions, some included in the first document tabled for the Council Meeting on May 27, including questions I wish to raise. The comments further added complaints about Rae Road. Someone who applied to council to investigate the issue had a response from council that it was only a minor difficulty and was unlikely to attract funding either now or into the future.

When populations grow rapidly, councils can't be expected to solely be responsible for the investment in roads. If they did, the council rates would be significantly higher. We have been starved of funding from State and Federal departments, resulting in traffic problems which need to be urgently addressed, and also to plan for future population growth.

An apology

This document was prepared in great haste as a late submission for the council meeting, and there may be duplications and repetitions for which I apologise. I work 7 days a week as well!

The case I present:

WA, with its resource sector is the engine room of the Australian economy.

Rockingham is the largest city outside of Perth, and the combination of Kwinana, Rockingham and Mandurah should be a Region with a cabinet minister responsible for it.

Rockingham and Baldivis has the greatest concentration of FIFO workers anywhere in Australia, and is the engine room of the WA resource industry. But FIFO workers also reside in Mandurah and even Bunbury.

Apart from the resource industry paying a lot of tax, so do the FIFO workers, whilst also making sacrifices to work FIFO, being away from home for long

periods. Their reward for contributing so much tax to State and Federal governments should be to have greater state and federal funding in the area!

However, having a premier in charge of a state half the size of Europe, the Rockingham electorate has largely been overlooked. A belated legacy of upgrades to the High Schools and in the dying days of the election campaign, an upgrade to the Mike Barnett stadium to help keep the seat safe in the by election is simply not good enough.

Surrounded by the safest seats in the country at both State and Federal levels, you do not get the investments needed. It is the squeaky wheel that gets the oil, the marginal seats.

The journey from Paterson Rd to the industrial strip, Henderson, Freo, Stock Road or the Kwinana Freeway is subject to great delays at peak times. Because these routes cross several council boundaries and State and Federal seats, this problem has not been addressed.

Likewise, because Rockingham is in safe seats at Federal and State level, we are starved of infrastructure, particularly in housing and roads.

The results of a mass migration from the eastern states has made housing, to either rent or buy, unaffordable for local residents, resulting in overcrowded homes, people living in caravans or becoming homeless. That is not my area of expertise.

But town and road planning are a keen area, having worked at the Urban Transport Study Group in Sydney in the late 1970s. Sydney is one of the most complicated cities in the world to design roads, train lines, bridges, bus routes etc. Two of its universities have large Transport Study departments offering consultancy services to cities around the world, and their expertise may be of importance.

In the 1980s, residing off Oxford St (Leederville/Mt Hawthorn) I joined the Lake Monger Access Group, later becoming its chairman. Leederville /Mt Hawthorn was cut off from Lake Monger by the Mitchell Freeway. It took a while of intensive lobbying, attending meeting, etc, but shortly before an election, the opposition offered to build the bridge if elected, and the following day the ALP promised to build the bridge! I stood in that election for the seat of Glendalough, and I have the unusual distinction of standing against two people who went on to become State Premier, the first being Dr Carmen Lawrence. So I have some form. I have been fighting for bus shelters for Rockingham High School students in Swinstone Street for the best part of 20 years, and even offered to pay for a bus shelter, which council rejected.

After moving to Rockingham in 1990, around 1992 or 1993, with help from the Sound Telegraph and the Weekend Courier, I organised a petition requesting an Emergency Department at the Rockingham Council. Pre internet, this wasn't an easy task. When I reached my goal of 10,000 signatures, this was presented to

State Parliament.

In 1994, I stood for council, losing to someone backed by a political party, Mark McGowan.

In 1996, when Mike Barnett retired, I stood in the state election, as I saw a few other issues that needed addressing, such as toilets at Point Peron. Again I lost to Mark McGowan.

After the Palm Beach redevelopment of 2018, the number of parking bays in Railway Terrace was reduced from 90 parking bays to 22. Importantly, where there was an unofficial drop off point next to the Peace Pavilion, right next to the ocean, the drop off point was lost. In addition, the Rockingham Hotel closed its doors, and with it, its carpark. The combination has made parking a big issue on busy days and beach events.

I wrote to Mark McGowan, Madeleine King and the council with a proposal that they all contribute and buy the Rockingham Hotel. The hotel to be leased out or redeveloped. The Liquids night club (below ground level) to become a two level car park to serve the Hotel's Patrons, with an entry fee redeemable at the bar. And for the rest of the carpark to be used as a drop off zone for families to drop off families, picnic hampers or whatever, a few more disabled bays and, importantly a place for tourist or school excursion buses to park. The Rockingham Hotel was an absolute bargain, and generations to come would have thanked all parties for their vision. But it was not to be.

When a plan for Rockingham called for submissions, I addressed a question to council after noting the following.

As part of the plan, it was noted that tourism had been dropping off since 2017, and proposals were made for attracting more visitors through events etc. I argued that this was putting the cart before the horse. The issue was the parking! 2018 was when the Boardwalk redevelopment occurred, sacrificing 68 parking bays and the drop off point, so convenient for dropping small children, the elderly etc. Then in 2020 the Rockingham Hotel closed and with it the carpark. I suggested that there was still an urgent need for a drop off zone and bus parking in Question Time, but council considered that the beach front does not have a parking issue.

I believe this indicates that I have a reasonable amount of determination to achieve results, and have resolved to do so on this occasion. It is hard to prevent an idea whose time has come. There is an incredible successful novel by Bryce Courtney, called *The Power of One*. *The Power of One* has sold over 8 million copies In Australia, it was the largest-selling book by a living Australian author, with over half a million copies sold.

I think it is also wise not to underestimate the power of one, either! Although it might be easier to form a lobby group of interested people to lobby for better roads, housing etc and other funding required from State and Federal Government.

With the population of Rockingham growing from 40,000 in 1990 to over 150,000 now, there are significant traffic issues. There is likely to be a growth spurt unless the (in my view, hideous) AUKUS agreement is cancelled. In 15 or 20 years, the population is likely to be 250,000 or 300,000

We urgently need not only to address current traffic issues, but at the same time, plan for the future.

This can only happen with SIGNIFICANT investment by both State and Federal Government.

I may have to form a lobby group to do this, but I plan to approach all levels of State and Federal government to get this issue addressed, as soon as possible, starting with local members at state and federal level, but also ministers who have roads in their portfolio, and Roger Cook in both his capacity as local MLA for Kwinana and as Premier, and so on.

It should be noted that Kwinana has a population of around 54,000, and Mandurah over 100,000. Together with Rockingham that is over 300,000. If the seat of Brand and these cities were considered as one Region or unit, it would qualify to have a WA cabinet responsible and answerable to it. Kwinana's population was around 17000 in 1990, and has more than tripled since. The population of Mandurah was 25,000 in 1990, around 102,000 now, a four fold increase in population. Rockingham's population has multiplied by more than 3.5 times.

As there was no clear reference to population on the Rockingham Council website, I have emailed requesting more detail on the population in 1990 and now

From the Mandurah City Council website:

"It is home to more than 99,000 people as of the 30th June 2023." I have sought clarification of population in 1990.

I have been unable to find reference to the population on the council website in either 1990 or now, and have sought clarification.

From the Kwinana Council website:

"Kwinana is the second fastest growing local government area in Western Australia, with the population predicted to double in the next 20 years."

Likewise, I have emailed Kwinana council for details of the population in 1990 and now.

In comparison the population of Perth in 1990 was approx 1.2 million. It is now about 2.5 million, so its population has done little more than double, but attracts proportionally way more investment on roads, and public transports,

than our area, which has been starved of the necessary investment required to alleviate and prevent the growing pains that the area of Kwinana, Rockingham and Mandurah so badly needed.

Investment in the roads and other infrastructure have failed to keep pace, the roads are inadequate and need serious intervention before the population continues to grow. Time is of the essence.

I tried to find more accurate statistics from the Australian Bureau of statistics regarding more precise and accurate populations at different points in time, following a suggestion my research was not thorough enough.

Western Australia is divided into 10 distinct regions for administrative and economic purposes: Kimberley, Pilbara, Gascoyne, Mid West, Wheatbelt, Peel, South West, Great Southern, Goldfields-Esperance, and Perth. I believe we need one more to cover Kwinana, Mandurah and Rockingham as being a separate entity from Perth, with its own Minister responsible and answerable to the new region.

There are already Ministers for all other regions: the Kimberley, Gold Fields-Esperance, The Pilbara, Great Southern, Mid West, South West, Wheatbelt, Gascoyne, Peel Great Southern, except Perth. Yet Perth, although it doesn't have a minister responsible for it, attracts a disproportionate amount of funding. In addition there is a Minister for Regional Development, a Transport Minister and Assistant Minister and a Minister for Road Safety, Reece Whitby, the MLA for Baldivis. In addition, the Premier, Roger Cook is the minister for State Development and also MLA for Kwinana.

So why is the area from Kwinana, Rockingham, and Mandurah, with a population of over 300,000, the largest population outside the Metro area, not considered a region and have a Minister responsible for it?

I will be lobbying the relevant Ministers, the local MLAs, the local Federal Member and other relevant Federal Ministers requesting a massive injection of funding to fix the roads due to the congestion issues resulting from such a rapid growth in population in a very short time frame, causing extreme growing pains, resulting in traffic and road issues which are in desperate need of fixing but are sorely underfunded, but to spend extra to plan for future growth so it is a lasting solution, not a band aid fix.

A major upgrade of Point Peron Road, with a foot and cycle path should have been done years ago. The road from Safety Bay past the lakes is dual carriage way with cycle path, but with the popularity of Point Peron and the traffic needs for HMAS Stirling, this was an obvious candidate for funding, something I lobbied Mark McGowan about, together with toilets at Point Peron, although he was responsive when I pointed out the erosion of the path around Point Peron was terrible and no one had thought to fix. There was an upgrade to protect the path, but the \$1.1 million project did not include toilets.

Recently a resident requested some work be done to resolve issues in Rae Road. A few delays and excuses and finally this, several months later "Considered a minor difficulty, but not sufficiently serious to demand funding, even in the long term". If a serious issue is considered a minor difficulty then there is clearly a lack of funding, and to consider it took several months to reach that assessment just on one issue, it is clear that Rockingham City Council does not have the resources to investigate all the many traffic issues, and nor is the funding available.

After posting on local FB chat groups, the issue of Rae Road was raised in comments multiple times. I think it is an issue Council can no longer ignore, despite saying it is not considered "sufficiently serious", comments such as the difficulty turning right into Rae Rd from Seabrooke, Tully and Acapulco.

Further comments from posts on local FB chat groups.
Some previously included in first document to be tabled.

Just build garden island hwy with bridges around the lake like the proposal for Roe 8

The garden island highway needs to go ahead to relieve some congestion.

Thread:

This is the kind of forethought that would get you sacked in any government department. You have to remember governments are reactive not proactive.

Response

I did once lose a government job for speaking up! I had worked for 4 years for Westone Services, as a secondment, rolled over a year at a time from my position as a TAFE lecturer. Westone Services was a part of the Department of Education to pioneer online courses, but the way it was run was a law unto itself. WA passed the Public Interest Disclosure Act in 2003, designed to protect whistle blowers. As Westone reeked / stank of nepotism and cronyism, in 2004, I finally blew the whistle under the Public Interest Disclosure Act. I was the guinea pig. While everyone else was going through the process of applying to make their secondments permanent, I was locked out of work for a couple of months, had no opportunity to become permanent, and my secondment was not renewed when it expired! The biggest issue is that the procedure of the Public Interest Disclosure Act was to lodge my complaint to the very people I was complaining about, who were not going through the standard selection processes for appointing the most suitably qualified candidates. The penalties for employers disadvantaging whistle blowers were a significant fines or jail. The case was investigated and my claims were found to be true. However the Department of Education were merely given a slap on the wrist, not penalised with any fine, my opportunity to become permanent in the new role of developing online courses was denied, and the Public Interest Disclosure Act was found totally wanting and lacking teeth. That was when I changed to a completely different career, basically a forced change, but which I

much prefer, as a practitioner focusing on relieving aches, and pains and headaches. It was a career change I could not have foreseen in a million years. As I stood up to be counted in 2004, and have stood for election several times, I am again standing up to try and fix existing issues and plan for a population of Rockingham of 250 to 300K in 15 to 20 years.

I won't still be here then, but if you think you help improve the outcome, why not give it your best shot?

End of thread.

"Considered a minor difficulty, but not sufficiently serious to demand funding even in the long term"

Thread

You really should live opposite a school in Sydney.

It's a 30-45 minute issue twice a day.

Star of the Sea (which is at Capacity) and RHS have both been there for 50 years. And Swinston St is currently being upgraded with speed limiting speed bumps and new footpaths for students safety.

There is far greater traffic issues like the Freeway extension which should have gone all the way past Mandurah, the 140,000 residents of COR need to get in and out of the area to work and home with out the congestion and being limited to 2 lanes isn't working.

Response:

Hi VVVV, I will be tabling a second document to Council on Tuesday. All comments such as yours will be included. The time has come for council, State and Federal governments to be more proactive instead of reactive. What started with an issue of Swinstone St has resulted in a large number of helpful comments in the FP pages I posted on.. The Swinstone St upgrade does not reduce the likelihood of a crash at the dog leg at Swinstone. People speed up when turning right into Swinstone St to avoid a long wait. A car was written off at the dog leg about 18 months ago, which the traffic smoothing did not consider this. Many comments arose about issues on Rae Rd and other issues. I have broadened my quest. There are Ministers in the WA cabinet responsible for different areas of WA, as it is so vast. Ministers for the Kimberly, the Pilbara, South west etc. As the populations of Kwinana, Rockingham and Mandurah have multiplied since 1990, over 3 times in Kwinana, 3.5 times in Rockingham and 4 times in Mandurah, I am canvassing for a new Region to be declared to include these 3 cities and for a Minister to be responsible for it and answerable to the Region. I take completely your point about the freeway extension. The population of this region has grown much faster than Perth since 1990. But all the infrastructure seems to be in Perth. The area I am proposing has a population already of over 300.000, the largest population, and need significant and coordinated funding from State and Federal Governments to fund improvements to localised traffic hotspots, and to plan for the future with a strategy for roads and transport systems which affect all three cities, and with an eye to road and transport systems as far as Bunbury. I intend lobbying State and Federal governments in equal measure. It shouldn't be left to an old man to do this, but when you live in an area as the

perfect place, you want to leave it in a better shape than when you find it, which is where I get the passion from! Again, thanks for your suggestion which will be included. However, reverting to Swinestone St, it is not being upgraded. Council got a grant for addressing it as an accident hot spot. Nothing more. Still no plans for bus shelters, a footpath on both sides of the street and more. You would expect a significant upgrade of Rockingham High School would upgrade the roads as well.

Thread:

Google is informed by people such as you and me!!! Ever think of contacting Bureau of Statistics... or even the Council!!! You really worry me if this if how you found your facts, long lost memories and Google!

Response 1

But you are right! This from Google: "The City of Rockingham's estimated resident population (ERP) for 2024 is 154,132." Last time I checked it was 140,000. That is an even more compelling reason to address current traffic issues and incorporate plans to cope for when the population reaches 250,000 or 300,000. So, thanks for questioning my research, it strengthens my case for lobbying intensely for state and federal investment in upgrading roads and other transport systems in the area! So thank you!

Hi MMMM, I am trying to do do more widespread research for a second document to be tabled at the council. It takes a lot of time and I'm working too! Please bear with me!

End of thread. Also mentioned in first document tabled.

New Comment.

Great work your doing and yes, the state & federal governments should be spending a much bigger portion of our (Rockingham) tax payer taxes back in the Rockingham area. Not funnelling it up to big road infrastructure projects in the northern suburbs of Perth. There is a surplus there to be spent so lets get it spent here in Rockingham. Nothing major has been spent by the Federal or state government for Rockingham in 30 plus years.

Anonymous member 782

If you really think Rockingham has traffic issues you need to get out more.

People in Rockingham need to start lobbying the state government for funding towards these local projects. They're sitting on bucket loads of our tax payer's cash in reserve which they're struggling to find projects in the northern suburbs to spend it on. We need to change this spending imbalance and redirection of our taxes to the northern suburbs.

Give your Labor mp a call get it sorted

A roundabout at hungry jacks would alleviate some of the congestion turning right onto read. Leeuwin shall remain closed !!

Too much time on your hands, short story

If only Rockingham had a state representative who was Premier

Apologies to all concerned for asking so many questions and raising so many issues all at the one time.