

19 June 2015

Mark Bailey MP
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De-Coupling of Heavy Vehicles (follow-up to meeting with Minister)

Dear Minister

Thank you again for meeting with WBBROC members on 21 May at Parliament House. One of the issues we discussed was the problems Councils have with the de-coupling of heavy vehicles and B-doubles. You asked us at our meeting to send you a letter with background information and maps, and that is the intention of this letter and its attachments.

As mentioned to you at our meeting, WBBROC has concerns regarding the increasing heavy transport movements using OMOL (Over Mass Over Length) type vehicles into and through the region. While WBBROC acknowledges the efficiency of the longer vehicles and their suitability on State Highways and specifically approved local government roads and streets, the vehicles in that configuration are not suitable for movement in general urban streets.

Therefore, there is a need for these vehicles to be able to decouple. Historically, this has been done on roadsides informally. However, these sites often do not meet safety standards and are inadequate for the growing transport loads. The sites need to be available 24 hours a day, be adequately sized for the potential use and located for convenient maximum transport productivity. Security is an important issue but they should be located and constructed so they do not cause a nuisance to adjacent residents/property.

I have outlined details of some areas and related issues below, with maps and photos as attachments. The first example is from Glanmire on the southern approaches to Gympie (see map in Attachment 1).

Hall Road, Glanmire is a council-controlled industrial collector road which gives access to Bunnings and other industrial and commercial businesses. Council regularly receives complaints from business operators regarding decoupled trailers which are restricting access to driveways and taking roadside customer parking. On week-ends in particular, there will often be up to 10 trailers parked on both sides of Hall Road.

Member Councils: Bundaberg Regional Council, Cherbourg Aboriginal Council, Fraser Coast Regional Council, Gympie Regional Council, North Burnett Regional Council, South Burnett Regional Council

The Bruce Highway enforcement bay at Glanmire is also used for truck parking and decoupling. An upcoming TMR project to upgrade this part of the highway (as early works for Section C of the Cooroy-Curra Bruce Highway Upgrade) will remove this area. It is understood that temporary provisions will be made nearby but a permanent site is required which gives access for trucks travelling both north and south on the highway.

Gympie Regional Council has provided a sealed truck parking and decoupling site on the Burnett Highway in Goomeri. The site is heavily used and the Council feels that it would be appropriate for TMR to take over maintenance responsibility for this site.

Similar problems are experienced in Bundaberg at a number of sites (see map in Attachment 2).

A typical example is a site on the Isis Highway approach into Bundaberg. The site is immediately parallel to the main carriageway and partially sealed. Adjacent is a recreation reserve used by sporting bodies, including touch football. On the opposite side of the road is the Bundaberg Airport and the site is directly under the extension of the main runway. High vehicles/trailers parked in this area infringe into restricted air space and interfere with operational requirements of the airport.

Uncontrolled decoupling operations in this area detract from the tidy entrance to the city. However, there is no satisfactory alternative available, and while options for alternative siting have been proposed, funding is a significant constraint with no apparent support from State Government. While some of the transport is to the benefit of Bundaberg, some of the movement is simply transiting along the coastal corridor, with just drop-off in Bundaberg.

There are a number of other areas in the Bundaberg area where heavy vehicles decouple along roads. These are primarily in industrial areas, i.e. Verdant Siding Road, Ellen Drive East, Sheridan Street, Steptoe Street, Jealous Road and Takalvan Street.

The Fraser Coast Regional Council also experiences similar issues, as nearly all of the sites in their area that are used for decoupling are deficient in some manner. Attachment 4 is an investigation note prepared by Fraser Coast Regional Council which provides more detail and maps of the issues faced in that local government area.

In summarising some of the main issues, I want to point out that roadside decoupling of trucks causes damage to roads and road shoulders (due to insufficient pavement and seal strength). There are also safety risks due to overtopping, which is sometimes exacerbated by pavement/seal failure. The photos in Attachment 3 clearly show some of this damage. Other issues include littering, spills and the public nuisance aspects.

Road damage is caused primarily because road pavements can't support the point loading imposed by the trailer support legs when decoupled (2 small pads carrying load normally distributed through 8 tyres to the road pavement). It is normally the kerbside leg punching through the pavement, which then sinks very quickly due to the additional forces imposed by load shift, causing the trailer to roll over (see photos in Attachment 3).

Minister, I have provided the type of information that you requested us to send to you. You will see from the comments I have made above, and the maps and photos provided, that the decoupling of trucks causes real issues for our members.

I therefore ask that you and your department give this matter serious consideration and I look forward to a considered and supportive response in the near future.

Kind regards



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Enclosed/attached:

- Attachment 1 – Glanmire location map
- Attachment 2 – Bundaberg decoupling site map
- Attachment 3 – Bundaberg decoupling photos
- Attachment 4 – Investigation Note – Decoupling (Fraser Coast)