



# Fiona SIMPSON MP

Member for **Maroochydore**

Shadow Minister for Integrity in Government

Shadow Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning



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## **MASS TRANSIT PLAN SUBMISSION:**

FIONA SIMPSON MP, MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Please see below my formal submission to the Mass Transit Plan at the Options Analysis stage with Sunshine Coast Council.

I am FOR a modern public transport network for the whole Sunshine Coast and AGAINST the following elements of the mass transit options:

- Light Rail along Aerodrome Road, Alexandra Parade, Brisbane Road and Nicklin Way
- Changing the Planning Scheme to allow high levels of density along the Light Rail/beach corridor

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The Sunshine Coast needs an integrated transport system that connects across the region - east, west, north and south - and also connects the coastal strip to Brisbane with rapid transit.

This integrated transport system must recognise we are not one coastal city, but a collection of unique, vibrant towns from the beach to the Blackhall Range, which need to be better connected with the most efficient and effective network of transport modes to support jobs, business, lifestyle and the environment while also connecting us to Brisbane.

The "Mass Transit" project is not really an intra-regional system for the region, but a line between Caloundra and Maroochydore via Mooloolaba and Alexandra Headland. It is not rapid, but slow and would take approximately an hour to travel from Caloundra to Maroochydore (going via Sunshine Coast University Hospital) once both stages were completed.

It is also important to realise there will still need to be investment in a proper intra-regional system, as well as an inter-regional public transport system that connects to the North Coast Rail Line and Brisbane. Scoping the cost-benefits of one project (Caloundra to Maroochydore) and any business case must also take into account the overall network cost and benefits, including displaced traffic if road capacity is reduced.

All these projects are competing for the same funds within a smaller State Government infrastructure Budget, which has just cut infrastructure spending across Queensland over the next four years by \$4billion.

Good public transport is needed along this Caloundra to Maroochydore corridor, but must complement, not cannibalise the overall network and must not come at the expense of other

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important community values. Thus, public transport options, such as modern buses not light rail in this corridor and other Sunshine Coast routes connecting the various townships should:

- 1) maintain at a minimum existing traffic capacity - and not remove traffic capacity from the corridor;
- 2) maintain public parking (don't treat people who have to drive as pariahs. Not everyone lives near the beach);
- 3) respect people's access to public spaces such as the beach, particularly at Alexandra Headland as many people accessing this and other beaches don't live between Caloundra and Maroochydore, but Buderim and in the hinterland, west of this corridor;
- 4) first understand the 'no go' limitations and non-negotiable constraints such as the impact there would be of downgrading access to iconic areas such as "the bluff" at Alexandra Headland by removing parking;
- 5) evaluate the impact any options have of causing traffic congestion and displacing traffic on to other parts of the road network; and
- 6) NOT be used to change town plans to increase housing density to high levels beyond public opinion.

For these reasons, I believe light rail on the Caloundra to Maroochydore corridor is an investment risk to the rest of the intra-regional network, community values such as outlined above, and also to the inter-regional network. However, a modern bus fleet with adaptations which respect the above six points would connect the whole Sunshine Coast and maximise linkages to the inter-regional transport hubs (rail).

A modern bus fleet with improvements to the road network to help them move efficiently and investment to go where they need to go, when they need to go, with better connections with other bus services between towns of the Sunshine Coast is required for an intra-regional system. Heavy rail on the North Coast line branching to Maroochydore at Beerwah (CAMCOS) would help connect the coastal strip to Brisbane as well as the hinterland south.

In the hierarchy of towns, Maroochydore is recognised in the SEQ Regional Plan as the Coast's largest, key employment and service hub and it is also physically central to these other towns. It draws workers and customers from the north, south and west and needs to be at the centre of any integrated transport system with rapid transit connection to Brisbane.

Connecting Maroochydore to the North Coast railway line with a modern rapid transport system - such as heavy rail along the CAMCOS corridor - will support and anchor Maroochydore's role as a key, central employment hub and ensure the Coastal strip is connected to the hinterland as well as Brisbane, taking pressure off the Bruce Highway. It also ensures that the development of Caloundra South occurs as a connected township and is part of the Sunshine Coast, rather than drawing the centre of business activity to the southern end of the Sunshine Coast.

The danger of investing first in light rail from Caloundra to Maroochydore on the Nicklin Way, Brisbane Road, Alexandra Parade and Aerodrome Road is that it would undermine the investment in rapid transit connecting the North Coast rail line to Maroochydore and still not provide a true intra-regional public transport network.

## **CAMCOS/MULTI-MODAL CORRIDOR – Beerwah to Maroochydore**

I note that Council say they also support CAMCOS/heavy rail to Maroochydore. I would welcome their support as I call for the State Government to address the issues raised by Infrastructure Australia which requires the State Government to progress the project by:

- 1) amending their current transport strategies to include CAMCOS rapid transit (preferably Heavy rail on this preserved multi-modal corridor to Maroochydore connecting to the heavy rail line); and
- 2) taking ownership of this project to enable the project to progress.

This would address two delivery risks identified by Infrastructure Australia, who said they would welcome seeing a revised business case, but first it requires the Queensland Government to get on board.

I support rail on the CAMCOS corridor, but it is a preserved multi-modal corridor and all options should be part of a proper business case where the Queensland Government doesn't absent themselves as the proponent.

## **LAND USE**

I support the duplication of the North Coast rail line —and I'm delighted to see this underway.

I find it somewhat ironic that a "Mass Transit" option is being advanced where preliminary planning is focusing on levels of high density between Caloundra and Maroochydore, but there is no discussion about the rail duplication and the need for a "Railway Town Plan" which allows these townships to grow appropriately as self-contained entities, with a strong focus on their unique character and amenity (ie the European model).