



# Media statement

## ***Regarding the West Gate Tunnel Project***

*Attribute quotes to:*

*G21 – Geelong Region Alliance CEO, Elaine Carbines*

*Issued 8 March 2018*

G21 calls on all politicians in the Legislative Council to think carefully about the long-term social and economic impacts of continuing to block the West Gate Tunnel Project.

G21 has long advocated strongly for a solution to the West Gate and western suburbs traffic congestion on economic and social grounds.

Advocacy has included meetings over many years with politicians of all parties and many key department officials.

Finally we have a solution within reach and, frustratingly, it looks about to be whisked away from the people of Geelong.

We are concerned that the project is now at risk with the Legislative Council yesterday [8 Feb] moving to block planning consent.

Yesterday's blocking action will again unnecessarily delay a much-needed solution.

People have already waited too long for action on the growing West Gate traffic bottle-neck.

The tunnel project must go ahead to meet the future needs of people and businesses in Geelong and the G21 region.

Traffic congestion is already significantly impacting commuter and business access to Melbourne. This has economic and social impacts for our region.

The West Gate Tunnel solution would help alleviate that congestion from 2022, the planned completion date.

Planning and building any alternative to the current tunnel proposal would delay a solution until, potentially, many years beyond 2022.

The West Gate is already the fastest growing road corridor to Melbourne, with traffic increasing each month.

Two-thirds of the 20,000 people who commute daily to Melbourne from Geelong region travel by car. Traffic volumes will inevitably climb in response to the Geelong region's rapidly growing population.

The current congestion is a disincentive to economic investment within our region, hindering the flow and viability of our products and goods trade.

Businesses in the Geelong region, and the new suburbs west of Melbourne, increasingly require good road access to transact with the state's commercial heart.

The tunnel project promises to provide commuters an alternative route and take around 28,000 vehicles off West Gate Bridge, cut up to 20 minutes off commuting times and remove many trucks from key roads and streets.

### Background to G21's stance

G21 has long supported improved road and rail transport links between Melbourne and Geelong.

We previously publicly supported the East-West Link project, until that contract was overturned by the current state government.

The G21 Board has been briefed twice on the West Gate Tunnel project. In April last year the Board gave in-principle support to the project, subject to the appropriate planning approvals being received.

G21 also made a submission to the Environment Effects Statement process for the project last July.

The West Gate Tunnel Project has since received all the necessary planning approvals and construction had commenced, with an expected completion in 2022.

### Advertisement

As part of its advocacy on this issue G21 has been signatory, with other organisations, to an open letter published in Melbourne newspapers calling on Parliament not to block the tunnel project.

The advertisement was co-ordinated by Infrastructure Partnerships Australia and included endorsements from other organisations: VCCI, Australian Logistics Council, Victorian Transport Association, UDIA (Urban Development Institute).

G21 did not contribute funding to the advertisement.

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