

The Following is the full responses for the opinion of the Eastern Freeway/tollway. Also attached is a copy of the initial questions. Members are given a number for privacy reasons, and if you would like to speak to anyone regarding their comments you will need to contact the Chamber, who will get the corresponding member to contact you.

Responses came from Siemens, Kenworth, Maroondah Tyre Centre, RBL Financial Services, Complete Cable Solutions, Denso AAA, Timeless Enterprizes, Easy I.d.'s, Maroondah Credit union and more.

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## **Original questions**

One of the things Chamber is good for is getting YOUR opinion to government. We therefore need to know what YOU think about Issues. Some members have quite strong opinions about the Freeway and the proposed Tolls. We'd like to know what you think about the current status/situation re the proposed Eastern Freeway extension to Ringwood?

And the link to the Scoresby Freeway?

Were you anticipating a benefit from a Freeway?

Is the difference between a "free"way and a "toll"way significant to you? If yes, how so? If not, how not?

Do you see any disadvantages in having a freeway?

If the freeway was changed to a Tollway, would that affect your perception of value received?

If yes, then why?

What would you like to see Chamber do about your views?

Thanks in anticipation of your response

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## **Respondents opinions**

In response to your request for comments.

I don't agree with Tolls for the Mitcham Frankston freeway.

I don't understand how delaying a project, then combining it with another section can be an economic benefit and save money. It was a tactic introduced because the Bracks Govt. knew they did not have the funds to proceed after their extravagant promises made during their time in Govt. Sadly the community did not see through the rhetoric. Charisma won over common sense.

Duplication of Stud Road from Boronia Rd to Mountain Hwy is long overdue too. It's obvious the Govt. do not have road development as a community priority.

The proposed Freeway will not help reduce the traffic flow north/south bound on Stud Road. The volume of traffic from B

Doubles, semis, Trucks etc using the road, (single lane past my office) make it a hazardous environment, as vehicles go to and from the industrial areas to the east.

Mr. Smorgon let the "cat out of the bag" 2 months ago when he suggested tolls, and the Bracks Govt. ducked for cover, the reality was the money set aside for the Springvale Rd-Ringwood extension was gone and the only way to get the road in place is to slug the motorists.

All the predictions as to traffic volumes will be erroneous, because they were all based on a toll free road. Suburban streets and the community will be the losers as traffic will avoid the tolls. Remember the predictions for City link? This proposed road will be no different. The time savings won't exist and why should I pay a toll to sit on a parking lot as happens on City Link?

Sadly, despite any opposition that can be mounted Bracks will not change his mind on this issue, not even for electoral votes. He'll have his safe seat, his super and perks of office, so why care about the freeway in the sandbelt.

I do however encourage you to mount a campaign against the unfairness of the decision. The Bracks Govt. needs to have a long hard look at its self over this and many other broken pledges.

Regards  
Member Respondent Number 1

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Hi Helen,

While I do not expect the freeway to bring business to me, I do anticipate it making access to my clients easier. However I believe that making it a tollway will discourage visitors to the area and cause some streets to become shortcuts, causing jams. My experience with Citylink is that unless you are a frequent user it is a disadvantage - the \$9 to 10 daily access rate being a deterrent. With the ever increasing traffic in the area the two freeways are needed to ease congestion and help limit pollution. Given the often wasteful use of the current budget surplus, immediate action on the freeways is desirable. A significant portion of the costs is in the bridgework already completed, for little benefit. Hopefully we can get on with this work without half a dozen investigations costing millions each!!

Member Respondent Number 2

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It is of the utmost importance to my business that the Eastern Freeway is completed as soon as possible.

The Eastern Freeway was our top priority when we chose a site for this business 14 years ago. We have 8 vehicles on the road picking up and delivering throughout the Eastern Suburbs as well as Altona to Somerton. As in all business's today, time is money.

I believe Tollways are the only fair way to go. User pays, they have been doing it for years overseas, It's not as if there is no alternate route, people need to realize using the freeway is not compulsory. It would save my Company so much in time as well as running expenses, Citylink is the best thing to happen to Melbourne, I am happy to pay for the convenience and the time saved.

It's about time we as a country stopped wanting everything for nothing,

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#### Member Respondent Number 3

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I am most concerned regard the break of promise by the state government and the possible impact that this change will have on many business concerns in the effective area.

I am sure many companies have made plans or have implemented changes in their location selections on expansion or establishment with the attractions a freeway has in transport costs.

To make the freeway into a tollway will add a further cost to the delivery of many services that may take the edge from pricing in a competitive market.

To use the tollway in private travel is an independent decision but in business, the courier will take the most direct and quickest route. The additional cost of tolls will not be swallowed by the courier company and therefore we could expect an overall increase in transport costs as they would be amortized over ALL routes.

WHAT NEXT!!!

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#### Member Respondent Number 4

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People paying tolls in Citylink are city workers, opera goers, commuters to Queenscliffe and occasional users. A predominantly wealthy demographic.

People who are proposed to use the Scoresby are a different demographic altogether and may not have the capacity to pay.

I just think it is fraud.

They enter a contract with the Federal Government. Broken.

They enter a contract with voters in the marginal Scoresby corridor at the last election. Broken.

The election result would not have changed, however Wendy, Gordon(?) and Lorraine would still have jobs. It would be getting partisan for the chamber, however someone should be focussing in personal detail the affect this fraud has had on these very hard working and dedicated people.

Perhaps more importantly, Bracks may not have won control of the upper house.

When they were first elected they were in charge of a surplus in excess of B\$2 per year. Despite record receipts from gambling, traffic fines and stamp duty, a mere 6 years on the budget is under pressure.

Where the hell has it all gone? Why hasn't anybody asked?

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#### Member Respondent Number 5

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I am very disappointed and angry in the governments change in allowing a toll to be placed on the freeway. I would like to know if this toll has an end date or will be ongoing therefore a huge profit for the company running the tolls or the government. It hasn't been made clear what the period of the toll is. I believe the government is overspending in a lot of areas and it is now realising it is falling short of funds for such projects and this won't be the last time they privatise/raise funds by getting the public to pay for it in additional expenses and taxes.

Regards  
Member Respondent number 6

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One of the things Chamber is good for is getting YOUR opinion to government. We therefore need to know what YOU think about Issues. Some members have quite strong opinions about the Freeway and the proposed Tolls. We'd like to know what you think about the current status/situation re the proposed Eastern Freeway extension to Ringwood? And the link to the Scoresby Freeway? Were you anticipating a benefit from a Freeway?

I was anticipating a benefit, as it would have theoretically reduced my drive time from 1hr 15 mins to approx. 40mins, a huge benefit in time.

Is the difference between a "free"way and a "toll"way significant to you?

Yes, to the tune of approx. \$1'500 per year if the tolls are benchmarked against city toll. What Bracks and his government are doing is disgraceful and they will be ousted from government at the next election as a result. To promise no tolls in their election campaign and re-iterate it time and time - then make a U-turn speaks volumes for the way they treat the public. They forget that they are the public's elected representatives, not demi-gods!!

If yes, how so? If not, how not?

The freeway is part of our states infrastructure and should be funded from the huge taxes that they receive in road tax, registration, petrol tax etc. A toll-way is a joke! There is no decent public transportation out this way that links the eastern suburbs to the south. Yet we pay tax just as much as anyone!

Do you see any disadvantages in having a freeway?

No, it is needed greatly as the Eastern and South Eastern suburbs are a nightmare to navigate as you have to zigzag everywhere in order to reach your destination.

If the freeway was changed to a Tollway, would that affect your perception of value received?  
Definitely - as above.

If yes, then why? What would you like to see Chamber do about your views?

I would like the Chamber to let the government know that they have lied, and as a result will never receive my vote in any election as long as I shall live. We pay huge taxes, road tax, petrol tax, the federal government have promised to partially pay for it and they do this, What is happening to our taxes - oh I know it pays their superannuation when they retire. I am totally disenchanted with government in general and feel that Bracks is a joke.  
Thanks in anticipation of your response

Please note that all these views are explicitly my own and bear no reflection on anyone I work for or know.

Member Respondent Number 7

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Were you anticipating a benefit from a Freeway? ***For the region - yes. For my business - no not directly.***

Is the difference between a "free"way and a "toll"way significant to you?  
***Do you mean do they affect me differently? In terms of financial impetus to the region - I don't think so. In terms of paying a toll - yes it affects me. In a way the user should pay, but many people / sectors other than those who drive on the Free/Tollway will benefit. They should contribute to the cost / maintenance.***

If yes, how so? If not, how not?

Do you see any disadvantages in having a freeway? ***Of course (environmental / noise pollution but these are heavily outweighed by the benefits.***

If the freeway was changed to a Tollway, would that affect your perception of value received? ***In terms of an economic impetus to the region - no. Value received by whom- The motorist? The community? Businesses? I guess the answer to this ambiguous question is no.***

If yes, then why?

What would you like to see Chamber do about your views? ***Give an unbiased aggregation of responses to Council / State and Federal Governments. The submission must reveal how many business / people responded and some details of their nature.***

Member Respondent Number 8

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I do certainly believe that there is lots of business benefit in constructing the Eastern Ring Road. Bring it on!!!

I do not believe there is a significant difference between tolled or "free" - we will end up paying for it one way or the other. It is either paid for on a user-pays basis or within our taxes. The real issue is just a political one - surely the government knew it would have to apply a toll before the election.

This should not stop the freeway proceeding - it is too important financially to delay. This sort of infrastructure improvement is the purpose of government in the first place.

The Chamber should keep as much pressure as it can on the government to start the freeway and not be side-tracked by the political issues it has left itself open to.

Regards,

Member Respondent Number 9

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In my opinion some of the major people that will suffer are the small business people of the outer [Croydon, Ringwood etc] as the opportunity to establish well served clients in the inner city has been dealt a severe blow. In the years that I have been in business the number of benefits of running your own business and the service to the community by giving employment to people has diminished. We pay more than enough taxes, in all shapes and forms that to place a toll on something that was originally budgeted for is wrong. It is not our fault if the government has not taken enough care in ensuring that the public transport systems are not being managed correctly. Again we seem to be footing the bill for something that was out of our control. Why don't the Government take a wage cut, rather than an increase, which was taken place not so long ago.

Regards

Member Respondent Number 10

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Firstly and as a matter of principal, we oppose tolls on all roads, (including the Monash & Tullamarine Freeways) contending that roads represent part of the infrastructure that governments traditionally have and should provide from road related taxes including the windfall from speed cameras and petrol taxes. After all, these taxes are supposed to assist in reducing the road toll by improving road safety. What better way than by improving the quality of our road network thereby encouraging organisations to establish themselves in growth corridors. As to the specific proposals under consideration, both issues are of great concern to our Company and a source of considerable disappointment for we would expect our parent company overseas to ask us to provide some plausible rationale for such a sudden and major policy turnaround.

Compounding this sudden change in position, I am given to understand that the proposed Scoresby Freeway was one of the positives / infrastructure plans marketed to this company when critical decisions were being made (e.g. to locate our plant in Croydon in the late 1980's.) It has taken a very long time but we were happy to be able to advise our parent company in Japan that the works were finally set to proceed as planned for so it seemed based on government assurances given at the time of the election. How quickly this commitment was revised though, without apparent regard to the damage / standing of the government's credibility. If this Freeway (and the Eastern extension) are now to become toll roads, the associated costs will have to be absorbed by someone in the supply chain. We have no doubt that whoever has to bear such costs will need to either pass them on or offset them in some other way adding yet another cost to a range of products (including our own) that are struggling to maintain competitiveness not only globally but even within this state where competitors in the inner / western suburbs for example do not face similar imposts. The potential impact on eastern & south eastern suburbs population growth and property values would also need to be assessed as living in areas adjoining toll roads either means more expensive commuting or alternatively more congested roads and increased travel times. Similarly, the existence of tolls may also prove a financial disincentive to potential employees from other areas considering working in the eastern suburbs. In summary, the plan to

toll this area is short sighted and not well conceived. It should be urgently re-considered.  
Regards

Member respondent number 11