



CONNECT O'HERNS ROAD | BUILD MERNDA RAIL

BUSINESS ADVOCACY KIT

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT THE CITY OF
WHITTLESEA'S *ACCESS DENIED* CAMPAIGN



**City of
Whittlesea**

INTRODUCTION

Residents and businesses in the City of Whittlesea are being denied access to basic transport services.

Our community is facing a daily grind of congested roads and poor public transport, and with 8,000 people moving into the municipality every year, the problem is only going to get worse.

As well as the impact on residents, the lack of government investment in transport in the City of Whittlesea creates significant challenges for our local businesses.

That's why the City of Whittlesea has launched *Access Denied*, a community advocacy campaign that we will be running in the lead up to the November State Election.

Access Denied aims to secure election commitments for two key projects to be delivered in the first term of the next State Government:

- Construction of access ramps on the Hume Freeway at O'Herns Road in Epping North; and
- Extension of the train line from South Morang to Mernda.

We know that the O'Herns Road project in particular will provide significant benefits for businesses in the Epping and Epping North area. It will remove traffic pressure from the freeway interchange at Cooper Street, help develop O'Herns Road into a key access route to the Cooper Street Employment Area, and support the area's logistical importance to Melbourne's North.

That's why we're hoping that you will get involved in the *Access Denied* campaign, because a strong business and community voice will be critical to building momentum for change.

We have developed this Business Advocacy Kit to provide you with information on the many different ways you and your business can get involved – from displaying a poster in your front window, to meeting with your local MPs to advocate for the O'Herns Road project.

All the information you need is here – once you know how, you'll be surprised at how easy it is to be an effective advocate for your business and your community.

WHAT IS IN THIS KIT?

We have provided for you:

- 10 ways to get involved
- Step by Step MP Advocacy Guide
- 10 Simple Rules for Advocacy
- Letter templates
 - Local MP letter
 - Local MP follow up letter
- Project Facts & Figures

10 WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

There are many different ways in which you can show your support for the *Access Denied* campaign. Some of them are very simple, others require a bit more effort – but all of them will help us build momentum.

The most effective action you can take is to write to and meet with local Members of Parliament – and we have provided a step by step guide to help you through this process.

However, we know this will not be something everyone can commit time or resources to, which is why we're also outlining other ways in which you can be a part of the campaign.

ACTION	WHY?	HOW?
Write to your local MPs	It may be obvious to us, but we can't expect our MP to just <i>know</i> that this issue is important. They need you to tell them. The more businesses they hear from, the more they'll understand just how important this project is.	This Business Advocacy Kit provides everything you need to know, including template letters.
Meet with your local MPs	As above. Meeting with your local MPs will strengthen the message you send in your letter. It's also good business to know your local MPs, so if you haven't met them before, now's your chance!	This Business Advocacy Kit provides everything you need to know, including hints and tips on how to handle the meeting/s.
Send a letter to the politicians using our online template	There is an e-mail template on our campaign website that allows you to send a message to the State Government and Opposition about why these transport projects are desperately needed.	Visit www.accessdenied.net.au and follow the instructions.
Display a campaign sign or poster at your business	This is a simple way, highly visible way to show your support for the <i>Access Denied</i> campaign. The more businesses displaying signs, the greater the impact!	Contact Cheryl Gallagher at Council on 9217 2037 or email Cheryl.gallagher@whittlesea.vic.gov.au to arrange for collection or distribution of a sign/poster.
Have <i>Access Denied</i> postcards on display at your reception area or front counter	Collecting signed postcards is a major part of the campaign, and we want to collect as many as possible to show how important these projects are to our community. No postage stamp is required, so people can either drop them in the postbox themselves, or you can put them in your daily mail run at no cost to you.	Contact Cheryl Gallagher at Council on 9217 2037 or email Cheryl.gallagher@whittlesea.vic.gov.au and we'll send some out to you.

<p>Display an <i>Access Denied</i> bumper sticker on your vehicle or across your fleet</p>	<p>This is another simple, highly visible way to show your support for the campaign.</p> <p>By displaying stickers on your vehicles, you are taking the message on the road!</p>	<p>Contact Cheryl Gallagher at Council on 9217 2037 or email Cheryl.gallagher@whittlesea.vic.gov.au and we'll send some out to you</p>
<p>Engage with us on social media</p>	<p>The new City of Whittlesea Facebook and Twitter pages will be carrying lots of information about <i>Access Denied</i>.</p> <p>Help us build 'Likes' and 'Followers', and share your personal stories on our pages. The more we get, the more the politicians will sit up and take notice.</p>	<p>Find 'City of Whittlesea' on Facebook and like our page, and follow us on Twitter at @CityWhittlesea.</p>
<p>Share your story</p>	<p>We want to attract lots of media coverage for our campaign – and real people telling real stories is a great way to do that.</p> <p>If you would be happy to talk about how this project (or lack thereof) is impacting on your business – let us know!</p>	<p>Contact Sean McManus at Council on 9217 2383 or email sean.mcmanus@whittlesea.vic.gov.au and let us know if you'd be happy to share your story.</p>
<p>Tell your family and friends</p>	<p>If you have family or friends living in the area, they'll no doubt be familiar with the daily challenges we all face because of a lack of transport infrastructure.</p> <p>Perhaps they would like to send an online letter, display a sign at their home or sign a campaign postcard – we need to make sure they know how!</p>	<p>All the information your family and friends need to get involved is available at www.accessdenied.net.au</p>
<p>Any other ideas you might have</p>	<p><i>Access Denied</i> has been designed as a community advocacy campaign, because a strong community voice is the best way of getting our message across to the political parties.</p> <p>If you have an idea about something the campaign should be doing, we'd love to hear from you.</p>	<p>Contact Cheryl Gallagher at Council on 9217 2037 or email Cheryl.gallagher@whittlesea.vic.gov.au and let us know your ideas!</p>

STEP BY STEP MP ADVOCACY GUIDE

This is a step by step guide for how to become an advocate for the O'Herns Road freeway interchange.

At this point in time, the November State Election looks like it will be a very tight race, which is why we are seeking election commitments from both the Government and the Opposition for the project.

The key local MPs for this campaign are Danielle Green, Member for Yan Yean (Opposition), Craig Ondarchie, Member for Northern Metropolitan Region (Government) and also Member for Thomastown, Bronwyn Halfpenny (Opposition), as the O'Herns Road area is in the expanded seat of Thomastown.

The Liberal Party candidate for the seat of Yan Yean is Sam Ozturk while the candidate for Thomastown is not yet confirmed. It is recommended that you engage with these candidates as well so that they are aware of the importance of this matter.

The steps

1. Put your own personal politics away

It's completely irrelevant whether you voted for your MPs or not. What is relevant is that they are your MPs. They are representing you and your area in parliament and want to be in government after the election. That's why should talk to them.

2. Read 10 Simple Rules for Advocacy

It's the one page briefing sheet on page 9 of this document.

3. Find your MPs' contact details.

We've done the hard work for you:

Danielle Green MP
Member for Yan Yean

Postal address:

PO Box 376
DIAMOND CREEK VIC 3089

Phone number:

(03) 9432 9872

Email:

danielle.green@parliament.vic.gov.au

Craig Ondarchie MLC
Member for Northern Metropolitan Region

Postal address:

27A AXIS Centre, 797 Plenty Road
SOUTH MORANG VIC 3752

Phone number:

(03) 9422 0099

Email:

craig.ondarchie@parliament.vic.gov.au

Bronwyn Halfpenny MP
Member for Thomastown

Postal address:

274 High Street
THOMASTOWN VIC 3074

Phone number:

(03) 9465 7533

Email:

bronwyn.halfpenny@parliament.vic.gov.au

4. Send your letters using the templates provided

The letter templates are provided at the back of this document. While it's important that we're all providing a consistent message to the Government and Opposition, we have also left space for you to personalise the letter for your business.

It's important that the MPs understand exactly why the O'Herns Road freeway interchange is important to local businesses in their electorates.

The letters should be sent out using your business letterhead (if you have it), and if not, be sure to include your address details so the MPs can reply to you.

It is best to send the letter by mail rather than email. MPs receive thousands of emails every day and it's easy for things to get overlooked. If you must send the letter by email, it's best to send it as a PDF attachment with a short covering note in the email, such as:

Dear [MP]

I am a local business owner in the City of Whittlesea. Please find attached a letter regarding the urgent need for construction of access ramps on the Hume Freeway at O'Herns Road in Epping North.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

etc

If you're only able to send letters and not seek to meet with local MPs, you can now go straight to point 12 of this guide.

5. Call and make an appointment

Your letter to your local MPs will have indicated that you will be contacting their offices and seeking an appointment.

Wait a few days after sending your letter, then call the MPs office and ask to speak to the person who looks after their diary. Introduce yourself, refer to the fact that you have recently sent a letter, and explain why you want to meet with the MP. Say something like:

I'm a business owner in this electorate and a supporter of the City of Whittlesea's Access Denied campaign. I'd like to meet with [MP] to discuss the issue raised in my letter in regard to the urgent need for construction of access ramps on the Hume Freeway at O'Herns Road in Epping North.

Make the appointment for at least a couple of weeks away, to give yourself and the MP time to prepare (by giving the MP a chance to follow up on the issue before the meeting they may be able to give you more information than they otherwise would have).

Don't be surprised if they are not able to meet with you for a few weeks. Parliamentary sitting weeks take up a lot of MPs' time, and they often have other responsibilities on top of representing their electorates (eg. Craig Ondarchie is the Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier, and Danielle Green is a Shadow Minister for a number of portfolios).

6. Research your MPs

Make sure you know who you're talking to. What is their background? What issues are they passionate about?

Read their biographies on the Parliament website (www.parliament.vic.gov.au), and look at their Facebook and Twitter pages to see what issues they are interested in.

You may also wish to have a look at Hansard, the official record of Parliamentary debate, to see if they have ever spoken about this issue, or local business issues more broadly.

You can search Hansard at the following link: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/Hansard.

7. Prepare for the meeting

Your MPs will only have a limited amount of time to spend with you. It is essential that you prepare yourself in advance and make the most of your time. Think about what you want to say and how you will say it.

The content of the template letters and the Project Facts and Figures sheet we have provided for you is a good starting point. It's also beneficial to have specific examples prepared about the impact on your business (eg. issues with freight access, productivity wasted due to traffic congestion, etc)

The day before the meeting is due to take place, call the MP's office to confirm the appointment.

8. On the day

- Take some copies of any materials you might want to leave with your MP
- Take a deep breath, and make sure your personal politics are well and truly out of sight!
- Go to the meeting early – if it is at Parliament House you will need to go through a security scanner just like at the airport.

9. At the meeting

- Don't let your own personal politics show. It's important to be objective and professional.
- Be passionate, but don't get emotional.
- The MP may want to start with small talk (friends in common, the weather, recent events) or may want to get straight into why you're there. Be prepared from the second you walk through the door and be sensitive to how the MP wants to run the meeting.
- Keep it focussed, relatively informal and objective.
- You will have been given a time frame, usually half an hour or an hour. Make sure you respect this, as MPs are very busy. Don't run over the amount of time you have been given, unless the MP is clearly asking you to.

10. Leave the door open for another meeting.

This lets your MP know that you are interested in developing a relationship and gives you another chance to help them understand the importance of the issue. When you leave say something like: *"May I come back again in a few months to keep you updated?"*.

11. Send a thank you / follow up letter

As well as being good manners, this is a great way to keep the issue on the MPs' radar. We have provided a template that you can use, or you can write your own. Do it promptly after the meeting.

12. Let us know how it went!

It's important for us to know how the MPs have been responding to your advocacy efforts. Send us a short e-mail, or if you're happy to, a copy of any written responses you receive from your MPs.

This will be hugely valuable to Council when we are advocating to senior government leaders such as Ministers and Shadow Ministers on behalf of our community.

Send your feedback to [NAME] at [EMAIL] or call us on [PHONE].

10 SIMPLE RULES FOR ADVOCACY

1. Consider yourself an expert information source

MPs have limited time, limited staff and many competing issues to deal with every day. They cannot be as well informed as those out there on the front line. You can fill their information gap and be their expert.

2. Always tell the truth and admit when you don't know something

Make your word impeccable. Don't guess. Part of making your word impeccable is to admit when you don't know something. And it gives you a reason to follow up with your MP after you have researched an answer.

3. Know who is on your side

This is your strength – the MP will want to know this. Who in the community supports your position?

4. Know who is not on your side

The MP will also want to know who stands against your issue. Anticipate the opposition arguments and provide the answers and the rebuttals.

5. Make the MP aware of any personal connections you may have

If you have friends, relatives or colleagues in common with an elected official let them know. That is how we connect with one another.

6. Be specific

Tell the MP what you want. Ask them directly. Expect a direct answer in response.

7. Follow up

The MP should be held accountable for any statements they make to you. Find out if they took action. Then thank them for any action they took and make your next request (if applicable).

8. Don't burn bridges

It is easy to get emotional. Don't lose it, either publicly or privately, with MPs. Always leave your dealings with them on positive terms. You may need to come back one day!

9. You are the boss

You should be courteous, but not intimidated. MPs work for you.

10. Make sure to tell them you are a supporter of *Access Denied*

It adds credibility to the campaign.

TEMPLATE: LOCAL MP LETTER (GOVERNMENT MP/CANDIDATE)

[DATE]

[NAME] MP

Member for [ELECTORATE]

[ADDRESS]

[SUBURB STATE POSTCODE]

Dear [Mr/Ms] [SURNAME],

O'HERNS ROAD FREEWAY INTERCHANGE

I am writing to you as a local business owner in the City of Whittlesea regarding the urgent need for construction of access ramps on the Hume Freeway at O'Herns Road in Epping North.

As our local area continues to grow, the pressure on our existing transport infrastructure is increasing. The significant increase in traffic congestion is impacting on access to the various commercial, industrial and retail precincts in the region, resulting in a rise in business costs.

My business [INSERT BUSINESS NAME], employs [XX] staff with a turnover of approximately [\$XX] per year. Deficiencies in the arterial road network continue to be a challenge for the business, such as [INSERT EXAMPLES HERE – EG. PRODUCTIVITY IMPACTS, DIFFICULTIES MOVING FREIGHT ETC].

That's why I'm supporting the City of Whittlesea's *Access Denied* campaign, which is calling on both major political parties to commit to the construction of access ramps on the Hume Freeway at O'Herns Road in the next term of government.

The project will remove traffic pressure from the freeway interchange at Cooper Street, help develop O'Herns Road into a key access route to the Cooper Street Employment Area, and support the area's logistical importance to Melbourne's North.

It will also reduce costs for businesses, which will boost the area's competitive advantage, and provide easier access to affordable land developments and employment opportunities.

As my local Member of Parliament, I am seeking your support for this important infrastructure project for our region.

I would like you to raise this matter with your Ministerial colleagues to ensure they are aware of how important this project is to local businesses in Melbourne's north.

[INCLUDE IF YOU INTEND TO SEEKING A MEETING] I would appreciate an opportunity to discuss this further with you, and will shortly be contacting your office to see if a suitable time can be found.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]

TEMPLATE: LOCAL MP LETTER (OPPOSITION MP)

[DATE]

[NAME] MP

Member for [ELECTORATE]

[ADDRESS]

[SUBURB STATE POSTCODE]

Dear [Mr/Ms] [SURNAME],

O'HERNS ROAD FREEWAY INTERCHANGE

I am writing to you as a local business owner in the City of Whittlesea regarding the urgent need for construction of access ramps on the Hume Freeway at O'Herns Road in Epping North.

As our local area continues to grow, the pressure on our existing transport infrastructure is increasing. The significant increase in traffic congestion is impacting on access to the various commercial, industrial and retail precincts in the region, resulting in a rise in business costs.

My business [INSERT BUSINESS NAME], employs [XX] staff with a turnover of approximately [\$XX] per year. Deficiencies in the arterial road network continue to be a challenge for the business, such as [INSERT EXAMPLES HERE – EG. PRODUCTIVITY IMPACTS, DIFFICULTIES MOVING FREIGHT ETC].

That's why I'm supporting the City of Whittlesea's *Access Denied* campaign, which is calling on both major political parties to commit to the construction of access ramps on the Hume Freeway at O'Herns Road in the next term of government.

The project will remove traffic pressure from the freeway interchange at Cooper Street, help develop O'Herns Road into a key access route to the Cooper Street Employment Area, and support the area's logistical importance to Melbourne's North.

It will also reduce costs for businesses, which will boost the area's competitive advantage, and provide easier access to affordable land developments and employment opportunities.

As my local Member of Parliament, I am seeking your support for this important infrastructure project for our region.

I would like you to raise this matter with your Shadow Ministerial colleagues to ensure they are aware of how important this project is to local businesses in Melbourne's north.

[INCLUDE IF YOU INTEND TO SEEKING A MEETING] I would appreciate an opportunity to discuss this further with you, and will shortly be contacting your office to see if a suitable time can be found.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]

TEMPLATE: LOCAL MP FOLLOW UP LETTER

[DATE]

[NAME] MP
Member for [ELECTORATE]
[ADDRESS]
[CITY STATE POSTCODE]

Dear [Mr/Ms] [SURNAME]

O'HERNS ROAD FREEWAY INTERCHANGE

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me on [DATE].

I appreciated the opportunity to inform you about the urgent need for construction of access ramps on the Hume Freeway at O'Herns Road in Epping North.

As discussed at the meeting, **[IF YOU AGREED TO PROVIDE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, INCLUDE IT HERE]**

Thank you for agreeing to raise this matter with the your **[Ministerial/Shadow Ministerial]** colleagues. Please let me know if I can assist in any way.

I would appreciate it if you could keep me informed of their response, and of any other developments as the matter progresses.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to meet with you.

Yours sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]

FACTS & FIGURES

THE PROBLEM

As our local area continues to grow, the pressure on our existing transport infrastructure is increasing.

With the relocation of the Melbourne Wholesale Market, the planned expansion of Epping Central and the continued housing development in Epping North, the demands on the road network are becoming particularly acute.

The significant increase in traffic congestion is impacting on access to the various commercial, industrial and retail precincts in the region, resulting in a rise in business costs.

THE O'HERNS ROAD / HUME FREEWAY INTERCHANGE

A full diamond interchange at the intersection of the Hume Freeway and O'Herns Road will make a significant difference to congestion problems in the area.

Land reservations for the ramps are already in place, meaning construction can commence immediately.

THE BENEFITS

- Reductions in travel times, for the benefit of all road users
- Safer and more efficient traffic movement by separating vehicles according to their use and destination
- Improved access to key facilities (eg. Northern Hospital)
- Reduced business costs, boosting the area's competitive advantage over other parts of Melbourne
- Easier access to affordable land developments and employment opportunities

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

- The project is expected to generate 145 direct jobs during the construction phase
- An increase in Greater Melbourne's economic output of \$315.2 million during the construction phase
- By 2021, time savings for commuters of 214,173 hours per annum (valued at \$37.7 million per annum)
- An increase in Greater Melbourne's economic output of \$84.6 million during the operational phase.