



Perimeter Road

BACKGROUND

The need for some form of perimeter road for Margaret River was identified in the 1980s. BSD Consultants (September 1996) identified that planning for the Ring Road was required. In March 1997, BSD Consultants investigated options and the alignment of the perimeter road to the east of Margaret River was recommended based on technical, financial analysis and community consultation.

In November 2000, Western Infrastructure presented route definition study that included the following studies:

- Landowner consultation
- Biological survey
- Aboriginal heritage survey
- Natural / cultural heritage study

In December 2002 the Margaret River enquiry by design workshop was held, which supported the need for a perimeter road and the proposed location. The draft East Margaret River Outline Development Plan was advertised by Council in August 2003 and included the alignment of the east Margaret River Perimeter Road. It was adopted by Council in October 2004 and the WAPC in May 2005. Council has also included the Perimeter Road in its draft District Town Planning Scheme as part of the Local Planning strategy.

The Shire of Augusta Margaret River identified the high priority for the road from consistent requests from business operators, residents and visitors and formed the Margaret River Perimeter Road Lobby Group in September 2003. Through the activities of the lobby group, including meeting with stakeholders, interviewing main street business operators and conducting a Shire wide survey, it is clearly established that there is strong community support for the project. There is also very strong concern from the business community that if nothing is done soon, there will be a major impact on the reputation of Margaret River and a financial impact on businesses in our CBD.

Margaret River is one of Western Australia's most popular tourist destinations and has developed an international reputation as a tourist destination, however businesses within our town centre are concerned that the traffic on the main street is destroying the character of our town. Business operators believe that this is already impacting upon their businesses and are concerned that this will get worse very quickly.

The main street of Margaret River is a busy street with pedestrians, local traffic, tourist traffic and people parking all year round. To add to this a large regional high school and primary school are on opposite sides of the main street and a new university campus has recently opened. With 70 accidents having occurred in the last five years in the main street, safety is already a major problem. The main street is the primary heavy haulage route to the south of Margaret River and with the number of heavy vehicles from the region and on the main street increasing, the severity of accidents will only increase.



Proposed alignment





Community and business support has been demonstrated through a community survey carried out by Council that received an overwhelming positive response and through interviews with many of the business operators in the main street.

Council has also prepared a preliminary design and cost estimate for the road and has carried out consultation with land owners who would be affected by the perimeter road, all of whom agree with the need for the road.

Council has had discussions with Main Roads and the Department of Planning and Infrastructure who support in principle the Margaret River Perimeter Road however as of yet we have been unable to obtain any commitment for funding from the State Government. We seek a commitment for funding for the construction of the Margaret River Perimeter Road before this becomes tourism, business and safety disaster.

Traffic

Current daily traffic flows north of the townsite are 4755 vpd (Nov 2003) and south of the townsite 2393 vpd (Nov 2003).

Traffic has been growing at an average of 4.5% per annum over the last fifteen years.

Variation in traffic volumes during the year include a 17% increase in average daily traffic over the summer months and a reduction of 10% over the winter months.

Traffic modelling carried out by Riley Consulting for the East Margaret River structure plan indicates that with the full development of East Margaret River, traffic volumes will increase to up to 14,980 vpd in the town centre without the Perimeter Rd and 6240 vpd in the town centre with the Perimeter Rd.

Traffic volumes of 8,740 vpd are projected at the northern end of the Perimeter Road (approximately double existing traffic on Bussell Highway) and 4170 vpd at the southern end by 2020.

Safety

There have been 70 accidents on Bussell Highway within the Margaret River townsite within the five year period ending December 2002.

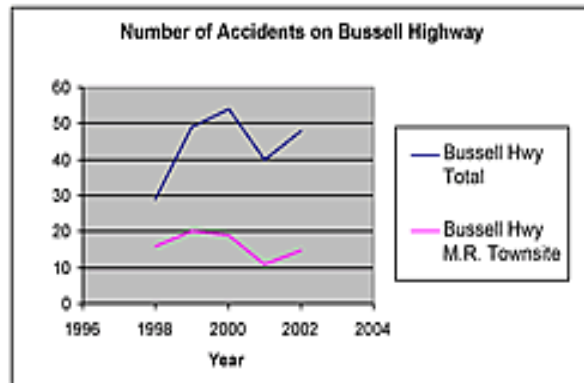
Priority safety locations are:

- School Crossing across Bussell Highway between Margaret River High School and Primary School
- Intersection of Bussell Hwy, Forrest Rd and Walcliffe Rd
- Intersection of Bussell Highway Fearn Ave and Willmott Ave





With increasing congestion and pedestrian activity on the main street, together with conflicts between heavy vehicles and local traffic, the number and severity of accidents is expected to increase. Accident trends are shown in the graph:



A decline in accident numbers occurred between 2000 and 2001 when streetscape works were carried out including median and carparking improvements, however accident numbers have returned to pre 1998 levels.

Accidents occurred both at Midblock locations and at intersections. The most accidents occurred at:

- Bussell Hwy, Forrest St and Walcliffe Rd intersection 14
- Midblock between Fearn and Forrest St 14
- Midblock between Churchill and Fear Av 13
- Bussell Hwy and Boojidup Rd intersection 10
- Bussell Hwy, Willmott Av and Fearn Ave intersection 9
- Bussell Hwy Churchill Ave intersection 5

The most serious accident in the Margaret River townsite occurred on Bussell Hwy between Churchill and Fearn when a car hit a pedestrian.

It is reasonable to expect that the number and severity of accidents on Bussell Highway within the Margaret River townsite will continue to increase with growth in traffic and pedestrian numbers on Bussell Highway until a perimeter road is constructed to remove heavy haulage and to allow introduction of traffic management measures on our Main Street.

*Crash statistics are based upon MRWA Crash information which includes reported accidents from January 1998 to December 2002.

Tourism

Margaret River is recognised throughout the State, nationally and internationally as a tourism destination. While it is the whole region that has contributed to this reputation, the Margaret River Main Street is the primary visitor servicing centre and includes visitor information centre, parks, galleries, coffee shops, hotels, restaurants, gift shops, surf shops, regional produce and other tourist retail outlets.

Heavy haulage past these facilities affects the amenity of our town and visitor experience. It also prevents Council from being able to take steps to improve amenity with street-scaping and traffic management as Main Roads prioritise the requirements of road trains over the tourism and economic viability of our town.