



Industry bides its time

| Gareth Parker

Industry is divided on the merits of a pay-to-drive freight corridor and environmentalists are implacably opposed to the construction of a new highway through the Beeliar wetlands.

The Opposition has questioned the Government's assumptions while accusing it of breaking a bipartisan promise not to introduce toll roads to WA.

Motor Trade Association chief executive Stephen Moir said the transport industry was supportive of the concept of a Muchea to Fremantle freight corridor and was always aware there would be some form of toll.

But he was concerned general road users would "flood" the road, reducing its efficiency for paid heavy users.

"We would just move the congestion problem from one area to another," he said. "One of the more radical ways to fix it would be to say everyone pays a toll on that route."

WAFarmers chief Dale Park said the burden of per-kilometre charging would fall heavily on exporters who sent livestock from

'One of the more radical ways to fix it would be to say everyone pays a toll on that route.'

Motor Trade Association chief
Stephen Moir

the Muchea saleyards along the entire 85km length of the freight corridor to the port.

"It sounds nice in theory," Mr Park said of the notion that benefits would outweigh the new charge. "But even if I saw the numbers I'm not sure I would be convinced."

Shadow transport minister Ken Travers called on the Government to release assumptions underpinning its business case.

"They said there would be no toll roads. It doesn't matter how they dress it up, this is a toll on our trucks and it will spread to cars," he said.

Greens MLC Lynn McLaren said: "Ploughing a highway through the last large wetland system in the Perth metropolitan area is environmentally irresponsible."