

Letter to the editor published (edited) as 'Agency had reservations about PFL', *West Australian* , 24/2/17, p.26.

Paul Murray's personal attack on Peter Newman (Feb 22, Opinion 'PFL opponent linked to quay') only serves to underline his lack of substantive arguments in favour of the Perth Freight Link (PFL).

To set the record straight, Peter was one of several unpaid consultants on North Port Quay and supported the now defunct project because of its carbon neutral ambitions. These ambitions are now being demonstrated in the State Government's White Gum Valley project which Peter's research on sustainability supports.

Peter has always taken pride in his work as a board member of Infrastructure Australia (IA) from 2008 to 2014. When Peter was on IA the PFL did not exist.

The idea for the project came from Tony Abbott and was subsequently rushed to IA, whose 2015 assessment noted that the PFL was not directly mentioned in a range of relevant state plans and policies, including the Metropolitan Region Scheme. IA was not presented with the outer harbour as an alternative to the PFL.

IA also noted that much of the work related to risks and deliverability was incomplete and expressed concern about estimated costs and benefits. Indeed, estimated costs have varied widely and IA never evaluated the most recent plan for the PFL which includes a tunnel estimated by the W.A. Government to cost \$903 million.

Plans for a new harbour at Kwinana were first made in the 1960s and have subsequently attracted bipartisan support at state level, as well as the support of Commonwealth organisations including Regional Development Australia.

The outer harbour is needed as large container ships are already diverted to Singapore, and indeed, the Fremantle Ports report that Murray quotes says it will be necessary in just 20 years. So why go for the PFL 'quick fix' that represents massive road spending to create more congestion and pollution while destroying Aboriginal and European heritage sites along with priceless urban bushland and wetland?

The outer harbour will create more construction jobs than the PFL, and more importantly more permanent jobs in Kwinana. It will enable more efficient use of rail and increase our international competitiveness while removing container trucks from suburban roads. And unlike the PFL it has been subject to long processes of consultation and planning.

These are important matters bearing on our state's future economy and environment. The people of Perth deserve discussion of the real issues, not personal attacks.

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