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Westgate Project Director
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Dear Sir,

WESTGATE STRATEGIC PLAN SUBMISSION
On behalf of Wolston Creek Bushland Group

We have not used your preferred feedback form as the options offered and the space available are inadequate to fully express our disapproval of all four options.

All the proposed options are unacceptable. Whilst certain elements are reasonable, all options would have the effect of destroying a significant open area and the social and environmental values associated with it. This would be the immediate and obvious result of increasing the industries in an already heavily industrialized area, and increasing housing beyond the capacity for the infrastructure to handle. The Centenary suburbs are now fully developed as residential areas with little parkland and, with the exception of private golf courses and steep riverbanks, there is virtually no open space.

The land along both sides of the Ipswich Motorway from Rocklea to Gales and reaching back to Richlands, Wacol, Carole Park and Ellen Grove to the south and Sumner Park, Darra and Monier to the north is already largely developed as one huge industrial area. To develop the so called Westgate area in the proposed manner would complete the process of turning the area into a wasteland of factories and suburban streets. It is this sort of unchecked exploitative development that leads to smog laden skies and crime riddled streets, and a demoralized and depressed citizenry.

All these options deny or ignore the realities of the area. A large area is flood plain, the area houses at least six prisons and detention centres, one of which will soon become the largest single prison in Australia, and all roads in the area are incapable of handling current traffic loads. The estimated 3,000 kangaroos and wallabies in the area could not be relocated and would have to be severely culled.

Whilst staff at the information session on Saturday 27th November insisted that the proposed residential development was all above the “once in 100 years” flood line, the pink area on your options plans does not coincide with the flood free area as shown on plans displayed elsewhere on the walls. In fact, some of this land would become islands and much would be submerged in the event of a flood. Furthermore, 2,500 additional houses, calculated at the quoted “15 to the hectare” size, is equivalent to a substantial suburb, and would put unacceptable pressure on roads and other services in the area, adding a further estimated 10,000 residents and 5,000 cars. Also the wisdom of mixing residential and industrial estates in the manner suggested seems questionable at best. The continuous presence over many years of cattle and/or kangaroos on the flat land proposed for residential development raises the question of the possible presence of bacteria capable of transmitting Q Fever to potential residents, and this element warrants investigation.

Egress from Sumner Park and access to Centenary Highway is inadequate, and the entire area is often heavily congested. Centenary Highway creates several major traffic delays. The city end often involves a bottleneck 3 to 4 kilometers long, and at the Ipswich motorway junction, delays that cause major “rat running” problems exist in the area. There is no proof that upgrades currently under construction will totally alleviate this bottleneck. Traffic using Wacol Station Road is similarly overloading the road, and any bridge over the Brisbane River to Bellbowrie, will only cause greater problems for the already severely congested Moggill Road. As Moggill Road and the Centenary Highway both terminate in the same congested suburb of Toowong, no solution to the problems of either road can be claimed. In short, the inadequacy of the roads, both in the Centenary suburbs and in the western and south western suburbs generally, together with the topography of Brisbane with the serpentine river and the close proximity of Mt. Coot-tha, make further major development in the “Westgate” area inadvisable. Some other solution to the problems associated with the increasing population of the region must be found.

The treatment proposed to be meted out to the residents of Wacol is disgusting. In all options, the livability of their suburb is diminished due to encroachment by mostly unbuffered industrial areas, and proposed new roads or the upgrade of existing roads will surround their modest suburb with the pollution of noise and fumes and build a barrier between the residents and green areas.

The State Government, which sited new prisons in the area away from housing to a position approximately midway between Riverhills and Wacol residents as an acknowledgement of the need for substantial buffer zones and committed to leaving such zones between prisons and residential developments, is now proposing to promote the building of houses on that very same land it declared to be and described as buffer zones, as well as in other places, far too close to prisons and detention centres. This amounts to poor planning and bad decision making, but sadly it is a deceit and an arrogance the likes of which are all too common from governments, but which are no longer being tolerated by the voters.

Perusal of the Brisbane City Plan 2000 indicates that all 4 of your options are in contravention of its aims and its detail. Under the City plan "*major industrial development is to be concentrated south of the Ipswich Motorway*", "*Major institutional uses in the Wacol Precinct are to preserve areas of regional environmental significance and the rural character*" and "*an accessible network of green spaces are to contain valuable bushland areas and public parks, and offer a wide range of recreational opportunities*". Furthermore, "*Future development within this area is to be coordinated to ensure preservation of the area's environmental and cultural significance. Areas of significant rural amenity and open space value are to remain in their current state or be developed for low intensity rural or open space uses*". "*Residential and industrial development is to be limited to existing locations..... (and) development in the vicinity of Wolston Park Hospital will not be supported prior to 2011*". It should be further noted that the City Plan shows the entire undeveloped area as green space, with "*rural, semi-rural/semi-natural and open landscape value*", some parts with "*Biodiversity value*" and as containing a substantial wetland in the area proposed for residential development

The recent events within the sewerage treatment plant involving the relocation of starving kangaroos and the difficulty in moving them a few hundred metres to a food source, amply demonstrate that any talk of relocation of the kangaroos and wallabies is a smokescreen designed to disguise the culling of the animals which will require the slaughter of hundreds of them. This would rightly disgust thousands of Queenslanders. The existence of gliders and flying foxes and the probability of spotted quoll, koalas and platypus in the area are an indication of the fragile and important ecology of the area, which will surely be degraded with development of the nature suggested in these options. Some years ago a pair of Wedgetail Eagles were observed building a nest on the hill opposite the firing range. Surveys have revealed the existence of vegetation of significance in the area which is under pressure from development.

At the risk of leaving ourselves open to a charge of not consulting with other community groups first, we would tentatively suggest that the proposal to build a new Police Academy on the site would seem to have merit should a site acceptable to all stakeholders be available, provided that the optimal area be

determined rather than the 53-106 hectares shown in the options and provided public access to the entire 5 km of riverfront is not denied. Similarly some limited industrial development in areas away from housing and in places in which the ecological value of the land has already been destroyed might be cautiously seen as a possibility. Whether a private school is warranted in the area (and why Private) is open to question, but if an organization is interested in building one on the site of the old Moreton A and B prisons, little damage to the environment is envisaged. Should Wolston Park Golf Course be demolished in the process of upgrading the Ipswich Arterial Road, then relocation to the area shown variously as "Westgate Common" and "Golf Course" in the 4 options plans would probably meet with little opposition from the residents of the area.

This community has done its "bit" for the city and the state. With a major multi-prison complex, a facility for the criminally insane, a sewerage treatment plant, a crematorium, currently one large sub-station, soon to be more, with all of its associated overhead power lines, and large areas devoted to industrial production, actually the second largest in the Brisbane metropolitan area, the community feels that enough is enough. Any development should retain the existing open areas and bushland. Further development should include golf courses, playing fields, sports ovals, pony clubs, picnic grounds, leasehold market gardens or horticultural land and perhaps even a carefully located BMX Club. These are possibilities which also have the advantage of allowing for co-existence with the kangaroos.

There is no justification for this development other than the commercial exploitation, or over exploitation of this resource to the absolute detriment of the social and environmental values of the resource. Any development of the site must be the sympathetic result of widespread, prolonged and meaningful community consultation, which would include communication and consultation between various citizen groups.

Until this happens strong and resolute opposition can be expected. Campaigning against sitting members, candidates, and responsible ministers will unfortunately have to be considered a possibility, should the Queensland Government prove to be intransigent over this matter.

Warner Dakin
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Ex coordinator Concerned Residents Against More Prisons