

# Avon Region must go it alone to conserve nature

## **Safe and Scenic Toodyay Road**

IN RECENT weeks we have been hearing more about the proposed diversion of Great Eastern Highway from the Clackline area heading north-west to cross and then rejoin Toodyay Road after Gidgegannup.

Long in the planning phase, information about the so-called EastLink is being provided by Main Roads WA at various public forums.

The creation of a new two-lane highway through bush areas means of course more loss of the natural environment.

In light of this, our group has been arguing that if EastLink should be constructed it can be combined with judicious local road improvements that link key extractive industries to the Great Eastern Highway, negating the need for such major re-engineering of Toodyay Road.

That argument has fallen on deaf ears so potentially we will be getting both EastLink and the conversion of Toodyay Road into the Great North-Eastern Highway.

Not surprisingly, a campaign has started to try and stop EastLink and we have met with representatives to share our respective experiences.

Of course, there will be those people in the Hills such as residents of Sawyers Valley and Mundaring who will be welcoming the building of EastLink and the traffic diverted away from their domestic environment.

This highlights the problem for the general community, namely how do we deal with the 'not in my backyard' problem?

We cannot, nor should not, stop development as such but there seems very little effective protection against development for any areas in the Avon region.

As we indicate in this month's *Letters* page, representation at a Federal level that is more sympathetic to the environment would help.

But those of us living in the Avon region also have to look after our own destiny. We urgently need a regional plan that seeks to protect the unique environment that drew people to live here in the first place.

So, as well as advocating to achieve lower-cost safety improvements to Toodyay Road, we will also be calling for more coordinated planning to achieve a better balance between development and the environment.

Come and see us at this month's Toodyay Farmers Market and visit our website [sastr.com.au](http://sastr.com.au) for more information and to sign our petition.



*Natural bush which attracts wildlife and visitors is under threat from road building.*