

**STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION
66/2008**

7 July 2008

The Opposition has received representations from beachgoers who have been stuck in traffic when the frontier queue extends along Devil's Tower Road. This problem affects users of Eastern Beach, Catalan Bay and Sandy Bay who want to get back home in the evening after spending time at the beach and it also impacts on residents of the eastern side of the Rock.

The problem is that vehicles in the queue bound for Spain are mixed up with cars bound for other destinations in Gibraltar.

It was particularly difficult at the end of last week when the queues were compounded by the go-slow of the Policia Nacional at the frontier between Gibraltar and Spain. This action has led to lengthy delays which have lasted for hours on end.

It is bad enough that the elderly and persons with young children are made to wait if they want to cross to Spain. It is totally unacceptable that they should have to wait when all they want to do is get from one part of Gibraltar to another.

The Opposition consider that these delays could have been alleviated if the Government had acted earlier and opened Dudley Ward Tunnel to traffic. It will be recalled that the tunnel was closed in February 2002 after a tragic accident. This is now more than six years ago. The Opposition have been constantly pressing the Government to reopen the tunnel in all that time, both inside and outside Parliament.

In 2005 the Government said that the cost of opening the tunnel was £ 4.6 million. In the financial year 2006/2007 they only spent £158,102 on the access safety works, and in the last financial year 2007/2008 despite an estimate of £1.5 million, even less was spent than the year before (£113,000). It now remains to be seen how much the Government will spend of the £ 1.25 million that they have estimated in this year's budget.

Commenting on the matter, Shadow Minister for Traffic Gilbert Licudi said:

“It is clear from both the expenditure figures and the time that it has taken to tackle this project that this is a low priority for the Government and that they could not care less. In the meantime, long-suffering motorists have to put up with queues and delays because of the inability of the GSD Government to get their act together.”

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