



Author condemns avenue 'vandalism'

By Carolyn Webb

BACCHUS Marsh's most famous son has condemned State Government plans to install a roundabout for trucks through the town's Avenue of Honour.

An emotional Peter Carey said breaking up the 3.3-kilometre-long "beautiful tunnel of light" would be vandalism and the project must not proceed.

"I cannot tell you how appalled I am by it," said the dual Booker Prize-winning novelist by phone from New York.

The roundabout's effect would be "ridiculous. I mean they really must not do it I'm sure a lot of people would agree with me.

"I would call on the State

Government to honour this shrine of remembrance, which means not desecrating it, not vandalising it, not destroying it."

The National Trust opposes the new four-lane road — a northern extension of Woolpack Road — that VicRoads plans to build north from the centre of the avenue to the Western Highway, skipping the eastern, or Melbourne, approach to the town. Eight to 11 elm trees would be removed and new ones planted to circle the roundabout.

Moorabool Shire mayor Pat Toohey said the new link would mean trucks bypassed the town and traffic flow would improve. He said the community had been consulted and most residents approved. But 3600 people have joined a

Facebook site called "Save the Bacchus Marsh Avenue of Honour".

Carey said the local RSL's endorsement of the plan made no sense. "It shows disrespect for their comrades, their ancestors," he said.

"This is not such an important road. And even if they thought it was an important road, would they put a freeway through the Shrine of Remembrance because they thought it was logical? Of course they wouldn't. Something doesn't smell right to me."

Carey grew up in Bacchus Marsh, where his parents ran a car dealership from the 1930s. His brother and sister still live there.

- The Age