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COMMITTEE LAUNCHES INQUIRY INTO ROAD TOLLS

The Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure has commenced an Inquiry into road access pricing, or road tolls, in NSW. "Roads are an essential utility but some people use them more and have a bigger impact than others," said Committee Chair, Mr Charles Casuscelli RFD MP.

"This Inquiry will look at equitable charges that generate sustainable levels of income to maintain and upgrade NSW roads."

"The recently released Long Term Transport Masterplan and the State Infrastructure Strategy both identified road pricing (tolls) as an essential element to deliver the transport capabilities and outcomes that our state sorely needs," Mr Casuscelli said.

"Tolls across the NSW motorway network make little sense from the perspective of ensuring equitable access or charging for actual benefit derived from road use, rather it reflects a motorway's financing history or commercial arrangements. This contributes to a general negative pre-disposition towards tolls from road-users."

"Another concern is that the traditional roads funding sources will continue to decline, increasingly efficient fossil fuel vehicles, hybrid vehicles, renewable energy vehicles and so on will result in lower collection of taxes at the fuel pump."

"Well-structured road tolls that are equitable, promote out-of-peak travel and that are based on real travel value will form part of any demand management strategy and therefore contribute to the reduction of traffic congestion," Mr Casuscelli said.

The Inquiry will examine new technologies in road access pricing and policies in other jurisdictions, as well as the socio-economic impact of road tolls. It will provide an explicit set of recommendations for the application of a road access pricing strategy in NSW.

"Road tolls must be an integral component of a long term transport strategy," said Mr Casuscelli. "The aim of this Inquiry is to produce a strategy for road access pricing for NSW."

The Committee is inviting submissions to the Inquiry. Submissions can be emailed to transportinfrastructure@parliament.nsw.gov.au, lodged via the Committee's website at www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/transportandinfrastructure or mailed to: The Chair, Committee on Transport and Infrastructure, Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000.

The closing date for submissions is Friday 15 February 2013.

For further comments please contact Mr Charles Casuscelli MP on 0407 327 356.