

23 October 2002

(General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4)

Portfolio

Transport and Roads

QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE DURING HEARING

1. Mr Cohen asked the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads, the Hon Carl Scully, MP—

Relevant area in Hansard: p 2

- (1) What does it cost to run the ventilation system for the M5, in excess of \$ 3 million per annum or in excess of \$3.5 million per annum?

Answer:

The Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) does not have access to the Contractor's costing system and does not know how all of the costs associated with running the ventilation system are distributed over the pay items claimed by the Contractor each quarter.

Further, NSW Government policy to preserve the integrity of tendering processes allows the public disclosure of only the total contract sum. The cost of individual pay items is privileged, as recognised by Sir Laurence Street in his report dated 25 October 2002 in relation to documents submitted to the Legislative Council during September 2002.

Relevant area in Hansard: pp 2-3

- (2) What quantity does the overventilation reduce the pollution inside the tunnel?

Answer:

The "overventilation" operates in accordance with the agreement between the RTA and Residents Against Polluting Stacks. Its main aim is to improve dispersion of the emissions from the Turrella stack. The effect on pollutant concentrations inside the tunnel is not known but is considered unlikely to be significant.

Relevant area in Hansard: p 4

- (3) How many people have taken up the 2001 property value guarantee?

Answer:

Three people have requested valuations. While two offers have been made, none have been accepted.

- (4) How many requests has the RTA had for relocation from residents around the M5 stack?

Answer:

Nine owners have applied.

Relevant area in Hansard: p 6

- (5) When are the fans turned off and how often?

Answer:

The Turrella stack fans are turned off for scheduled maintenance on the ventilation system and on the monitoring equipment in the exhaust tunnel.

The date and duration of shut downs that occur only between 9PM and 5AM are posted monthly on the RTA website and reported to the Air Quality Community Consultative Committee.

As these shut downs are scheduled when traffic volumes and CO levels are lowest, tunnel ventilation is then provided by the jet fans in the tunnel ceilings.

- (6) Can specific peak hour times be monitored rather than the current monitoring of averages over a 24 hour period?

Answer:

Air quality is continuously monitored.

Hourly data is reported on the RTA website as well as the goal in the Conditions of Approval, namely the 24 hour averages for PM₁₀.

- (7) (a) Is the tunnel turned closed to traffic when the fans are turned off ?
(b) Do cars and vehicles pass through the tunnel when repairs are being undertaken and the fans are turned off?

Answers:

As stated above, maintenance on the ventilation system is carried out overnight when the traffic volumes and CO levels are lowest.

The jet fans in the tunnel ceiling provide ventilation and the tunnel is not usually closed to traffic.

Relevant area in Hansard: p 7

- (8) Has there been formal permission from Planning NSW regarding condition 71 and portal emissions during emergencies?

Answer:

The independent design certification required under Condition 71 was approved by DUAP on 22 August 2000.

By letter dated 12 July 2002, Planning NSW advised that portal emissions were allowable during emergencies or where emergency personnel were involved.

- (9) Is monitoring of air quality for particles CO and NO₂ at the portals averaged out over a 24 hour period?

Answers:

No.

The portal monitor data is collected continuously and is presented to RTA as 15-minute average data, similar to the in-tunnel data. The data can be readily converted to other time frames for comparison with the 8-hour ambient goals.

Relevant area in Hansard: p 12

- (10) In measuring breaches and exceedances for CO levels is measurement taken for the entirety of the tunnel or at just one spot?

Answer:

There are 7 monitors along the main tunnel (4 in the Eastbound; 3 in the Westbound) at locations nominated by the designers where the maximum CO is likely to occur.

There are also 2 CO monitors in the Cooks River tunnel, one in each tube.

Relevant area in Hansard: p 15

- (11) Have there been any exceedances of condition 71 at the portals?

Answer:

Although not specifically required to do so under the Approval, the RTA monitors CO and NO₂ near the M5 east tunnel exit portals. Usually no impact on ambient air quality around the exit portals is identified from monitoring of portal emissions during incidents or overnight maintenance. The data to date indicates that the maximum increase for CO from any portal emissions is approximately 1ppm above background levels.

There have been no exceedances of the ambient CO goals attributable to portal emissions

2. Mr Lynn asked the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads, the Hon Carl Scully, MP—

Relevant area in Hansard: p 7

- (1) Do you have written quotes from manufacturers that guarantee removal of 95% of particulates down to 0.3 of a micron?

Answer:

The RTA is required to conform with NSW Government policy in respect of invitation of tenders. Hence, tenders cannot be invited unless the RTA has an intention to proceed.

Given that recent before and after studies do not identify any discernible impact from the stack on the ambient air quality and that actual operational data from emission treatment systems of the scale required is not yet available, the RTA is not in a position to seek written tenders.

Relevant area in Hansard: p 13

- (2) How many complaints have been received by the RTA, EPA and NSW Health about conditions in the tunnel?

Answer:

The RTA has received 15 such complaints.

- (3) How many complaints have been received by the RTA, EPA and NSW Health about conditions outside the tunnel?

Answer:

The RTA has received 154 such complaints to 8 November 2002.

3. Mr R Jones asked the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads, the Hon Carl Scully, MP—

Relevant area in Hansard: p 9

- (1) Are you aware that lanes are closed every day, twice a day, to meet condition 70?

Answer:

Unplanned lane closures due to incidents such as breakdowns are a regular occurrence in the M5 East tunnel as in Sydney's other major tunnels. Hence, 24-hour Closed Circuit Television surveillance and road patrols are provided to minimise the inconvenience to motorists.

The Contractor, Baulderstone Hornibrook & Bilfinger Berger (BHBB) has assured the RTA that unplanned lane closures have been the result of incidents within the tunnel or incidents beyond the tunnel that cause traffic to backup into the tunnel. There have been no reports of closures simply to maintain in-tunnel air quality.

Relevant area in Hansard: p 13

(2) How many breakdowns in the tunnel are there every month?

Answer:

NSW Government policy on the release of contract information prevents the RTA from publishing such data. The privileged nature of this information was acknowledged by Sir Laurence Street in his 25 October 2002 report in relation to documents submitted to the Legislative Council during September 2002.

Members of the Legislative Council are able to view M5 East statistics in BBHB's Quarterly Operations and Maintenance Report to 31 August 2002 provided recently to the House.

4. Mr Oldfield asked the Minister for Transport, and Minister for Roads, the Hon Carl Scully, MP—

Relevant area in Hansard: p 10

Is it correct that only 3 people had taken up the wood and coal burner buyback offer by 7 October 2002?

Answer:

Under the Wood Heater Buyback Scheme, by 7 October 2002, 260 application forms had been sent out, 67 applications had been received, 45 had been confirmed as eligible but only 3 applicants had completed all requirements and been sent their rebate cheques.

Administrative processing of claims will accelerate following the recent appointment of an RTA funded Co-ordination Officer at the Southern Sydney Region of Councils (SSROC) at Hurstville City Council.