

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE CROSS CITY TUNNEL'S SECOND REPORT (MAY 2006)

Recommendation 1

That the Government encourage the operators of the Cross City Tunnel to lower the level of the toll to \$2.90 at the conclusion of the current reduced toll period.

Response:

While the Government supports this recommendation in principle, the level of the toll is a matter for the Cross City Motorway. At the conclusion of the reduced toll period (5 June 2006), Cross City Motorway implemented a \$3.50 toll for cars (\$1.60 for the Sir John Young Crescent exit).

Recommendation 2

That the RTA ensure that all toll roads, whether publicly or privately operated, advertise the cost of use at entry points.

Response:

The Government supports this recommendation.

Recommendation 3

That the Government ensure that motorists are advised to take appropriate precautions against possible adverse air quality in tunnels, with such advice displayed on entry to road tunnels or by any other means.

Response:

The RTA publishes air quality monitoring results for the M5 East and Cross City Tunnel on its website www.rta.nsw.gov.au. It also provides a wide range of air quality information to the public on its website and at motor registries.

RTA also issues advice directly to NSW registered vehicle owners.

Recommendation 4

That the Roads and Traffic Authority investigate ways to improve the operation of bus lanes in the Central Business District.

Response:

The Government supports this recommendation.

The RTA continues to work collaboratively with the Ministry of Transport, bus operators and other agencies to improve priority for buses across the Sydney metropolitan area including the operation of the bus lane network in the Sydney CBD.

Recommendation 5

That the Roads and Traffic Authority investigate methods of improving the dissemination of information regarding changes to metropolitan Sydney road infrastructure to potential country users.

Response:

The Government supports this recommendation in principle. The RTA provides information to country areas on Sydney road infrastructure through advertising, community information campaigns and its website.

When the Lane Cove Tunnel project is completed, information on the Sydney orbital network will be provided to potential country users of the infrastructure.

Recommendation 6

That for future private toll road infrastructure projects, information on vehicle numbers be made publicly available on a regular basis.

Response:

The Government supports this recommendation in principle. The publication of traffic volumes is a matter for the private sector tollway operators.

Recommendation 7

That NSW Treasury, and relevant government agencies or parliamentary committees, conduct regular reviews of world best practice in the area of PPP policy, including examples of failed or problematic PPP projects, with the reviews to be made publicly available. Where possible, the reviews should be timed so that they can influence future revisions of PPP policy and guidance documentation.

Response:

The Government routinely accesses and uses information on best practice PPP policy of the United Kingdom and other countries, as well as reviews by the NSW Auditor General. All of this information is publicly available. The Government also routinely exchanges information on PPP policies and practices with other Australian jurisdictions. The current Working with Government Guidelines on Privately Financed Projects provide for the conduct and publication of post implementation reviews.

Recommendation 8

That the documents to be publicly released for any Public Private Partnership or Privately Financed Project include:

- The full contract and any material variations;
- A contract summary (verified for accuracy by the Auditor-General);
- Details of the public interest evaluation conducted prior to the decision to enter into the PPP or PFP;
- A summary of the Public Sector Comparator and the comparison between it and the successful project (verified for accuracy by the Auditor-General);
- The base case financial model;
- The Public Sector Comparator.

That, notwithstanding the above paragraph, an independent body, such as the Auditor-General, be authorised to assess the question of whether elements of any of the above documents be considered commercial in confidence, on the request of the parties to the contract.

That the NSW Government take proactive steps to ensure that the public are made aware that these documents are publicly available.

Response:

All privately financed projects are subject to Ministerial Memorandum 2000-11 Disclosure on Information on Government Contracts with the Private Sector, as amended from time to time. This Memorandum is currently being updated and the Government has recently supported the Freedom of Information (Open Government – Disclosure of Contracts) Bill in the Legislative Assembly. Government agencies (other than State Owned Corporations) are required to comply with these guidelines.

Ministerial Memorandum 2000-11 deals with, among other things, the treatment of commercial in confidence information.

Recommendation 9

That the NSW Treasury continue to collaborate with other Australian jurisdictions and pursue a standardisation of approaches in relation to Public Private Partnerships.

Response:

The Government supports appropriate standardisation of approaches in relation to Public Private Partnerships. New South Wales participates in an inter-jurisdictional PPP forum for the exchange of relevant information with other States and Territories and the Commonwealth Government.