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**From:** Sue Weatherley  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 7 June 2022 4:19 PM  
**To:** Portfolio Committee 6  
**Subject:** RE: Inquiry into road tolling regimes - Post-hearing responses - 24 May 2022 - Georges River Council

Dear Mr Hannah,

I would like to clarify some evidence that I gave on the day.

The purpose of the inquiry as outlined in the terms of reference for the inquiry are:

- (a) an updated review of the tolling regimes in place on different roads and an explanation for the differences between each,*
- (b) the total cost paid by drivers in tolls for the WestConnex toll road over the life of its contract, and across New South Wales to 2060, and the extent to which this represents value for money,*
- (c) the impact, and the geographical distribution of the impact, of toll costs on NSW drivers and on productivity,*
- (d) the extent of toll relief provided in NSW and whether it is adequate,*
- (e) opportunities to increase transparency for the public, particularly over how tolling contracts are negotiated and varied, and the extent to which tolls are paid,*
- (f) the rationale for allowing higher than CPI increases on certain tolls, and for the truck toll being set at three times the toll for car traffic,*
- (g) the ability or otherwise of trucking businesses to afford increases in tolling charges and the extent or otherwise of their ability to pass this through,*
- (h) opportunities to increase the assurance to the public that tolling arrangements represent the fairest possible outcome, including the appropriateness of involving an independent agency such as Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) in the determination of tolls and their escalation,*
- (i) the long term impact on government finances as a result of toll roads being wholly or partly operated by non-government entities,*
- (j) consideration of the impact of direct or debt financing of road projects, including what would have been the impact on regional road projects of the direct financing of WestConnex, and*
- (k) any other related matter.*

The evidence I gave to the Committee was focused on these broad terms of reference. As noted in my evidence I encouraged the panel to have a full a proper view of the road pricing, as tolls on some roads does have unintended consequences, encourages the wrong behaviour and tolls are inequitable. I also made the point very clearly that a program of road building funded by user pay tolls will not solve Sydney's road congestion problems as building more roads will create more traffic. This is called induced demand.

I was asked about whether I had heard the evidence of the previous witnesses, this included the Bexley Chamber of Commerce (pg 13). Therefore my response to the Hon Shayne Mallard was in the context of the very detailed concerns of local business and the representative of Bayside Council. When I said that there has not be a significant change on roads in Georges River, I was making the statement in context of all traffic, and I acknowledged that the problems of traffic did not stop at the boundary of the local government area, which is particularly the case for Stoney Creek Road. I also made the comment that the problem seemed to be worse in Bayside Local Government Area.

**SUE WEATHERLEY:** Principally people behaving in response to a price and therefore diverting into local roads is generally an issue more in Bayside than it is in Georges River. Certainly all the data we have doesn't indicate any significant change to the traffic levels on Georges River roads, but sometimes the boundaries are very—you know, it is just a line on the map, but it hasn't been significant. In the time since the tolls were introduced we've only had one complaint, which really wasn't about the tolls. The biggest impact has been in Bayside.

I now wish to add that the data from Transport for NSW, provided to Georges River Council, indicates that traffic volumes on Stoney Creek Road had increased in peak times by about 20%, but remained largely the same, if not a slight decrease, on the other major roads. There was an increase in heavy vehicles on Stoney Creek Road ( close to the LGA border with Bayside). There was no increase in heavy vehicle traffic on the other major roads.

Regards

Sue