



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 6 – TRANSPORT

MEDIA RELEASE

COUNTING THE COST: UPPER HOUSE COMMITTEE CALLS FOR REFORM TO ROAD TOLLING

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

1 August 2022

The Legislative Council's Portfolio Committee No. 6 – Transport today handed down its report on the State's road tolling regime.

Ms Abigail Boyd MLC, Chair of the Committee said, 'Over recent years, we have seen a significant growth in the number of toll roads in Sydney. This is not just new toll roads, but also the granting of new concessions on already built roads under the government's so-called asset recycling program. The funding for these roads is ultimately coming out of the pockets of New South Wales residents. They have a right to know whether these deals are in fact in the public interest and deliver a fair price to road users.'

Ms Boyd continued, 'The evidence tendered to this inquiry made it impossible to ignore the significant impact that tolls are having on residents and businesses. They are clearly paying a high price for the government's continuing privatisation of our roads, and not just in monetary terms. Paying exorbitant tolls just to complete a day's work, access medical care or attend study, is an unreasonable impost on household budgets that are already stretched by mounting cost of living pressures.'

'With far fewer transport options, residents of western, southwestern and northwestern Sydney are the hardest hit. They travel further than residents of other parts of Sydney to access jobs and recreation. The regime is fundamentally unfair and inequitable. Meaningful and lasting reform is long overdue', Ms Boyd added.

Among other significant reforms, the committee recommends the adoption of a network pricing model, including the introduction of toll caps and appropriate flag falls, rather than just distance based tolling. As part of the transition to network pricing, the committee calls on the government to also review toll escalation rates and toll relief and cashback schemes.

'Alongside reforms to pricing, there is clearly a need for better industry practices around customers in hardship. There has been a lot of attention on customer fees in industries like retail banking and credit. The road tolling industry in New South Wales appears to have escaped much of this attention, until now. The government should act immediately to reduce the unreasonable administration fees that road users are charged for travel on toll roads without a valid payment arrangement in place,' Ms Boyd said.



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In addition to reducing administration fees, the committee calls for the adoption of an industry-wide Code of Practice for managing debt for vulnerable customers, and for the government to establish in legislation an independent ombudsman for road tolling.

Information about the inquiry, including the committee's report, is available on the committee's website: <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=2792>

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For further information, please contact the Committee Chair, Ms Abigail Boyd MLC, on (02) 9230 3676.