



SCEGGS Darlinghurst

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2/2/06
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PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES - JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE CROSS CITY TUNNEL

SCEGGS DARLINGHURST on the matter of Community Consultation – 2nd February 2006

SCEGGS regards the school as an important part of the East Sydney community and we want to work with local residents, businesses and government authorities to ensure that the area is a safe, healthy and vibrant place to live and work.

In September, 1999 SCEGGS received a letter from PPK Environment & Infrastructure Pty Ltd inviting the submission of issues for consideration in the environmental assessment of the revised Cross City Tunnel proposal announced by the Premier of New South Wales on 8th September, 1999 and advising of upcoming information sessions.

During 1999 and 2000 SCEGGS representatives attended a number of public meetings conducted by PPK designed to provide a forum to allow discussion on the Cross City Tunnel EIS. A great deal of information in relation to the Cross City Tunnel was also received by post and through E-mail.

We believe that we have been given ample opportunity to raise issues of concern to us.

The school was also involved in meetings dealing with the following:

AIR QUALITY

SCEGGS was invited to have a representative participate in The Cross City Tunnel Environmental Impact Statement, Air Quality Liaison Group which conducted a number of meetings in late 1999 and early 2000.

SCEGGS had indicated that it had particular concerns in relation to any impact that the Cross City Tunnel would have on air quality in the immediate vicinity of the school.

By way of background, until 2002 the RTA had organised monitoring of local air quality on the SCEGGS site. Monitoring was conducted prior to the opening of the Eastern Distributor and tested again following its completion to assess the resulting changes. Results of tests carried out in 1996 showed relatively high levels of pollutants due to the heavy traffic on Bourke Street. The EIS prepared for the Eastern Distributor in 1996 concluded that air quality around the SCEGGS site and its immediate surrounds would not deteriorate following the opening of the Eastern Distributor. The reason given was that although there would be emissions from the ventilation stack constructed adjacent to the school at the corner of Palmer and Stanley Streets, these emissions would be more than offset by diverting the existing extremely heavy traffic on Bourke Street through the Eastern Distributor. The school was comfortable with this report and subsequent testing following the completion of the Eastern Distributor.

When asked to comment on the Cross City Tunnel project the school raised two issues in relation to air quality:

Proposed Ventilation Stack

Of concern to SCEGGS was a proposal to construct a ventilation stack in William Street in very close proximity to the existing Palmer Street stack and the impact the additional stack would have on air quality in the vicinity of the school. Concerns about the stacks being in such close proximity were also expressed by a number of residents. At the Air Quality Liaison Group Meetings, many other concerns were raised in relation to both this ventilation stack and one proposed for Darling Harbour. A number of experts on air quality were invited to address the meetings. It was later announced at one of the Air Quality Liaison Meetings by PPK that a decision had been made not to construct the William Street ventilation stack.

Increased Traffic flows

The EIS for the Cross City Tunnel (page 23 of the EIS summary) indicated that there would be an increase in traffic volume in Bourke Street following the opening of the Cross City Tunnel. SCEGGS raised concerns regarding a potential serious impact on air quality in the SCEGGS area if Bourke Street had heavy traffic and the Eastern Distributor's ventilation stack.

OTHER ISSUES

During 2004 and 2005 there were a number of other issues that were raised by SCEGGS either by letter to various organisations involved with the Cross City Tunnel or at public meetings. In relation to Bourke Street these included:

SAFETY AND INCREASED TRAFFIC ALONG BOURKE STREET

Of necessity SCEGGS generates traffic twice a day as parents drop off and pick up their daughters. The school also has many students who are pedestrians or travel by public transport. We are therefore very concerned about traffic management in the all streets of East Sydney.

Planning for the construction of the replacement SCEGGS primary school commenced during 1999 and the building was completed in 2003. The primary school was designed at a time prior to the school's knowledge of any impact of the Cross City Tunnel and took advantage of low traffic flows on Bourke Street created by the opening of the Eastern Distributor.

South Sydney Council was keen to alleviate the traffic build up in the streets around the school created by having only one student drop off point in Forbes Street. The Traffic Management Plan completed by our traffic consultants in October 1999 and approved by South Sydney Council included a second drop off and pick up point in Bourke Street. This is mainly used for children between the ages of 5 and 12. Utilising the second drop off point has dramatically improved traffic flow during morning peak hour traffic and in the afternoons in Liverpool, Forbes and Bourke Streets. Children also cross Bourke Street to gain entry to the School through the Bourke Street gates. The school raised concerns about safety issues of conducting these activities when it appeared that traffic volumes would increase along Bourke Street following the opening of the Cross City Tunnel.

SCEGGS was aware that Condition 288 imposed by the NSW Minister for Planning required The NSW Roads and Traffic Authority to 'identify ways of limiting rat runs using Bourke Street'. To this end, SCEGGS strongly supported the recommendation that Bourke Street be closed south of William Street.

The school has recently advised the RTA that it is concerned about the possibility of reopening Bourke Street. The drop off and pick up area in Bourke Street has not been tested in conjunction with the upgraded William Street and its reduced number of carriageways. There are concerns that parents turning left from William Street into Bourke Street to drop off or pick up their primary aged children during peak hours could create a grid-lock situation in William Street and also cause disruption to emergency vehicles and buses. The RTA has advised that it will discuss this matter further with the school.

INCREASE IN THE LEVEL OF STREET PROSTITUTION IN BOURKE STREET

The school has raised concerns about this issue. It was noted in The Cross City Tunnel Technical Paper No 20, at page 43 of the EIS Appendices that "*The RTA should liaise with South Sydney Council on the design of William Street, having regard to issues of surveillance and safety and potential displacement of prostitution and other activities from William Street into surrounding streets.*" SCEGGS noted that the Minister's Condition of Approval No 238 dealt with this issue and the School requested that it be included in a working group that was being formed comprising representatives from the NSW Police Service, the City of Sydney Council, the RTA and two community representatives. Although the School did not form part of this group, we do believe that we have been given ample opportunity through other avenues to voice concerns in relation to this matter.

GENERAL

- ◆ Prior and during construction of the Cross City Tunnel the school was contacted by a number of consultants in relation to:
 - ◆ dilapidation reports on buildings
 - ◆ minimising disruption from construction noise to the school during exam times
 - ◆ minimising disruption to bus routes used by the students
 - ◆ other issues that were of concern to the school.
- ◆ School Representatives also attended meetings during December 1999 designed to allow an exchange of ideas on the elements that influence the final design of William Street

In conclusion, we believe that we have been given the opportunity to raise the issues that were of concern to us in relation to the Cross City Tunnel.



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Business Manager