

Tabled by Mr Gyory
1.2.06

INQUIRY INTO CROSS CITY TUNNEL STATEMENT

Organisation: Darlinghurst Business Partnership
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The Darlinghurst Business Partnership represents over 100 businesses in the areas surrounding Oxford Street Darlinghurst.

We formed two years ago with the intention of managing the Oxford Street upgrade and improving area safety and business amenity.

In extensive discussions with both member and non member businesses, I can confidently assert that consultation over the Cross City Tunnel was for all intents and purposes, non existent.

My personal experience as a business owner and resident bears this out.

The lack of consultation only adds insult to the injury being perpetrated against local businesses, most of which are independent and struggling. Some have even gone under.

It is disturbing to relate that some people literally break down crying when you speak to them about their livelihoods. They are angry, desperate and hopeless.

I must confess that we *also* lack hope, in that while we appreciate the opportunity to address this inquiry, we feel that its scope fails to address the most pressing issue, which is returning public roads to the people that own them.

The negative impact of the surface changes cannot be over-stated.

They have increased travel times, increased congestion, increased anti social behaviours, increased taxi fares, reduced safety, reduced access, reduced passing trade, and made navigating the area a professional exercise.

The closure of Bourke Street in particular has killed business in that immediate area and created congestion on Crown and William. To translate this into the politically correct vernacular, 'amenity has been reduced'.

Two key objectives of the Environmental Impact Statement were:

- 1) 'to improve the environmental quality of public spaces within Central Sydney'
- 2) 'to improve the ease of access and reliability of travel within Central Sydney'

Not only has the CCT failed to realise these aims, but any reasonable person would conclude that in many places, the opposite has in fact been achieved.

It is particularly disappointing that the 'economic impact' of the tunnel and associated changes were never taken into consideration: Both in terms of the businesses to be effected *and* the

additional cost of navigating the city. This cost may be measured in both financial *and* social terms.

If I may be permitted an analogy: A living city has people as its lifeblood and for a living city to thrive, this lifeblood needs to permeate. If we restrict the flow to major arteries then the extremities begin to wither.

If we divert it past major organs altogether, they simply die.

As one of the most densely populated regions in Australia, Eastern Sydney *is* a major organ.

By council's own figures almost 900,000 people live there and these people need to get into and out of the city, not under it.

We accept the CCT as a positive reality, but completely object to the sacrifice of public roads and as such, strongly urge the removal of all obstacles to easy access into and out of central and eastern Sydney.

While funnelling may be part of the contract the State Government signed with the Cross City Tunnel group, it is not, and never will be, part of the social contract the government has with us.

Thankyou