

INQUIRY INTO CROSS CITY TUNNEL

Organisation: Leichhardt Council
Name: Clr Nick Dyer
Position: Mayor
Telephone: 9367 9222
Date Received: 30/01/2006

Theme:

Summary

Office of the Mayor

Contact: Jeff Thompson
Phone: 9367 9232

JSC CROSS CITY TUNNEL

30 JAN 2006

23 January 2006

RECEIVED

Committee Director
Joint Select Committee on the Cross City Tunnel
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000



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Attention: Rachel Simpson

Dear Ms Simpson

RE: INQUIRY INTO THE CROSS CITY TUNNEL

I refer to your correspondence dated the 8 December 2005 extending an invitation to Council to prepare a submission on the inquiry into the Cross City Tunnel.

Your invitation is timely as the Cross City Tunnel was the subject of detailed Council debate at its Ordinary Meeting held on the 22 November 2005. A copy of Council's resolution is attached. The resolution does not align directly to your terms of reference but outlines procedural and operational concerns associated with the funding and commissioning of the Tunnel project.

As regards the Terms of Reference (a), (f) and (g) Council would like to make the following comments:

- (a) the role of Government agencies in relation to the negotiation of the contract with the Cross City Tunnel Consortium.

Response:

The process of engagement between the NSW State Government and tollway operators has not been transparent. Council is of the view that taxpayers lack confidence in the Government's ability to negotiate contracts that best represent their interests. Council's position is demonstrated by its recent request to the Premier, Minister for Roads and the Local member to:

"Obtain independent legal advice from government solicitors to investigate ways in which government could renegotiate the cross city tunnel contract in the best interests of the NSW tax payer and reopen Bourke St at William Street, as per the request of Sydney residents"

- (f) the role of government agencies in entering into major public private partnership agreements, including public consultation processes and terms and conditions included in such agreements.

Response:

The less than expected patronage of the Cross City Tunnel, competition with public transport and congestion of surrounding city streets raises questions as to the need of the tunnel versus the long term public benefit. From a local perspective Council is concerned over the potential for motorists to increasingly use Leichhardt Streets as 'free rat runs' when faced with cumulating tolls on the Harbour Bridge, Eastern Distributor, Cross City Tunnel, M4 and potential M4 East. The opportunities to rectify these emerging shortcomings appear to be limited by contractual obligations.

- (g) any other related matters.

Response:

The Cross City Tunnel is one component of a fragmented solution to cure the shortcomings of a transport system that is bias towards private motor vehicles. Council is of the view that the Government should be pursuing long term sustainable solutions such as improving public transport by the expansion of light rail, better bus lanes and increased ferry services. The decline in public transport patronage needs to be arrested. Council believes that building more roads does not solve the transport problems faced by residents in Sydney's western suburbs. Council believes an integrated Public Transport system is a more efficient way of moving people.

If you require any further details, please do not hesitate to contact Jeff Thompson, Manager, Strategic Planning on 9367 9232.

Yours sincerely



Cr Nick Dyer
MAYOR
LEICHHARDT COUNCIL