

INQUIRY INTO CROSS CITY TUNNEL

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Theme:

Summary

Bicycle NSW is a democratically constituted, member funded, not for profit peak community organization established in 1976. This submission is authorised by the Board.

Mission Statement

To promote, advocate, and support cycling in all its forms as an environmentally sustainable and healthy form of transport, recreation and tourism through the engagement of government, industry and the community at all levels.

Bicycle NSW in the Community

With over 50 affiliated Bicycle Users Groups comprised of volunteers from local communities throughout NSW, Bicycle NSW is well placed to understand and act upon a range of community needs.

Cross City Tunnel

The Cross City Tunnel is of interest Bicycle NSW because of the role it plays in delivering NSW Government policy towards improving the quality of life offered to people who live, work or play in Sydney and NSW through the provision of infrastructure for bicycles. Such infrastructure opens up the opportunity for key community benefits traditionally delivered across a range of Ministerial portfolios:

- Community Health through encouragement of active lifestyles
- Environmental Sustainability through pollution reduction
- Improved Transport Infrastructure Capacity through better utilisation
- Building Social Capital through participation in sport, recreation and tourism

NSW Government Policy re Bicycle Infrastructure

Documented in 3 key places:

1. *NSW Bicycle Guidelines* - RTA Nov 03, latest electronic update July 05 available from:

http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/trafficinformation/downloads/technicalmanuals_dl1.html

2. *Bike Plan 2010* - NSW Government/RTA Sept 99 available from:

http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au/trafficinformation/downloads/bicycbikep_dl1.html

3. *Planning Guidelines for Walking and Cycling* - NSW Government 2004 available from:

www.dipnr.nsw.gov.au/cycling.html

Specific Comment based on the Inquiry Terms of Reference

- a) At time of writing work on bicycle infrastructure remains to be completed in accordance with the project conditions of consent. However, in negotiating the contract with the Cross City Tunnel Consortium, the RTA and other Government agencies were not entirely successful in securing terms consistent with expressed NSW Government policy with respect to bicycle infrastructure. For example, in failing to provide adequate off road cycle paths the bicycle facilities planned and being developed as part of the project do not meet the standards set out in the NSW bicycle guidelines (see 1. above) published by the RTA.
- b) Affiliated local community Bicycle User Group (BikeSydney) participated in the community consultation processes. Feedback suggests that much of the input provided by the participants would have become diluted through the process.
- c) See a) above. The outcome suggests that improvements could be made to the methodology. Bicycle NSW recommends the use of suitably qualified independent subject matter experts which, when coupled with an explicit review process for the delivery of appropriate project milestones, could do much to ensure compliance with NSW Government policy in specialist areas such as bicycle infrastructure.
- d) Bicycle NSW advocates full disclosure and transparency in all contractual and associated documentation.
- e) The failure of the project to fully deliver NSW Government policy with respect to bicycle infrastructure indicates some shortcomings in the communication and accountability mechanisms between ministers and their respective agencies. To better assist the Government in bringing the relevant agencies to account Bicycle NSW recommends:
- A greater level of direct contact between community organizations such as Bicycle NSW and relevant Government Ministers and the Premier.
 - Use of an independent quality audit to ensure project delivery complies with stated Government policy in the relevant areas.

f) In entering into public private partnership agreements, Government agencies should be guided by what is in the long term best interest of the community they serve, and with this in mind the rationale and justification for any partnerships should be transparent and clear to the community. Importantly any short term savings in infrastructure investment NSW Government Agencies may make through the use of private capital should be balanced against the following:

- Total cost to the community, including economic but also lifestyle and amenity impact
- The extent and arrangements for the sharing of risk and reward with private capital
- The effective cost of private capital in comparison with cost of capital available directly to government in its own right.
- The impact and conflict with other government agencies and community resource providers such as public transport through such things as non competition and associated penalty clauses

g) It is important to note that positive outcomes can come from major public/private partnerships. The recently opened Westlink M7 Western Sydney orbital road is an example of where the provision of bicycle infrastructure has closely reflected NSW Government policy through the provision of some 40kms of off road cycleway and walking path and over 60 connection points into local communities in western Sydney along the length of the path.

The Board of Bicycle New South Wales

January 2006