

## **INQUIRY INTO CROSS CITY TUNNEL**

**Organisation:** CrossCity Motorway Pty Ltd  
**Name:** Mr Peter Sansom  
**Position:** Chief Executive  
**Telephone:** 9033 3800  
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**Theme:**

**Summary**



Cross City Tunnel

CrossCity Motorway Pty Ltd ABN 45 098 446 839

Level 2, 131 Cathedral Street, WOOLLOOMOOLOO NSW 2011

Ph 61 2 9033 3800 Fax 61 2 9033 3801 Locked Bag 8500 POTTS POINT NSW 1335

## **SUBMISSION TO THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE INTO THE CROSS CITY TUNNEL**

This is a submission of the Cross City Motorway Pty Ltd (**CCM**) which addresses the key questions raised during the hearings before the Joint Select Committee into the Cross City Tunnel (the **Committee**) to date. Accordingly, these submissions will briefly address CCM's understanding of the Government's key objectives in relation to the Cross City Tunnel (**CCT**) project and outline the extensive community consultation and government planning processes which took place in relation to the project.

Construction of the CCT began in January 2003 in what was one of the most technically challenging road tunnel projects ever undertaken in Australia. The tunnel has been excavated with minimal disruption to the existing congested traffic network or the thousands who live, visit and work in the heart of Sydney. Each stage of construction was expertly planned and managed to reduce any adverse impacts to the natural, cultural and urban environment. The CCM solution, extending the eastern portal to the east of the Kings Cross Tunnel, significantly reduced the construction impact of the project by avoiding the extended lane closures and other disruptions associated with "cut and cover" works in William Street required as part of the original EIS approved design.

The CCT opened on 28 August 2005, less than two years and seven months after the commencement of construction, and was delivered on time and on budget.



## The Government's Transport Plan

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The RTA's written submission dated 6 December 2005 sets out an overview of the history of the CCT project and provides extensive detail of the planning process involved. The RTA's submission, and the chronology of facts underlying it, clearly reflects the fact that the Government had identified a need for a solution to the "unacceptable levels of [traffic] congestion" in the Sydney CBD and the concept of a road traffic tunnel beneath the Sydney CBD as far back as 1990.

In 1998 the Government produced a discussion paper entitled "The Cross City Tunnel, Improving the Heart of the City" which outlined a proposal for a cross city tunnel aimed at improving the infrastructure of transport in the Sydney CBD. In 1998 the RTA commenced extensive investigations and consultations to develop a concept design for the CCT. In 2000, the Government released a Request for Proposal to a number of consortiums, including CCM, for the construction and management of a cross city tunnel. The Request for Proposal outlined the Government's scheme for the CCT.

CCM submitted conforming and alternative proposals in response to the Request for Proposal for the Government's consideration. After a period of further consultation, review and planning, the Government in conjunction with a range of State and local government agencies, selected CCM as the preferred proponent for the CCT project.

The CCT has been designed to remove east-west through traffic and reallocate CBD road space for public transport, cyclists and pedestrian use, by providing the following benefits:

- Reducing congestion by eventually taking up to 90,000 vehicles off surface roads in the city;
- Improving access for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport
- Cutting journey times for motorists using the tunnel by avoiding 18 sets of traffic lights, cutting journey times from 20 minutes to 2 minutes;
- Reducing traffic noise levels;
- Improving air quality by taking cars off surface streets; and
- Improving the efficiency and reliability of east-west travel within central Sydney as well as the north/south traffic flow in the city including travelling times for public transport.

## The Community Consultation Process

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It has been suggested that CCM had sought a number of road changes as part of the CCT project in an attempt to "funnel" traffic into the CCT. CCM rejects any suggestion that CCM is responsible for road closures and that they were made for that purpose.

One of the Government's **key objectives** in conceiving and planning for the CCT was to reduce congestion by taking vehicles off surface roads in the city.

From the project's inception in 1999, the impact on local and regional surface streets were the subject of extensive and publicly available reports, reviews and proposals.



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- In August 2000 it released an Environmental Impact Statement (the *EIS*) detailing the proposed tunnel and potential environmental impacts that would occur as a result. The EIS was on public exhibition from 2 August 2000 to 6 October 2000. In particular, section 7.5 of the EIS provided an overview of the proposed changes to be made to surface streets within the corridor of the CCT.
- In response to the representations it had received in relation to the EIS, the RTA developed modifications that would result in a more efficient tunnel design and operating conditions. These modifications and all the issues raised in the EIS were then detailed in the Representations Report and Addendum to the Representations Report which were on public display from May 2001 and August 2001 respectively.
- The Minister for Planning approved these new modifications with 240 Conditions in October 2001 (The Approved Activity).
- In February 2002 CCM was announced as the preferred proponent. The tender submission from CCM incorporated changes to the Approved Activity which the Minister for Roads considered would provide more benefits and reduce construction related impacts to the community.
- As a result of the proposed changes a number of additional environmental impacts would occur. These were investigated and the results put on public display in the form of the Supplementary Environmental Impact Statement (the *SEIS*). The SEIS was available for public review and comment from the period 30 July to 31 August 2002.
- In response to the SEIS and as a result of additional studies (*in consultation with Airport Motorway Ltd, City of Sydney Council, Darling Harbour Business Association, Darling Park Complex, Department of Housing, Department of Health, Department of Transport, Energy Australia, Environment Protection Agency, Clover Moore, PlanningNSW, Public Transport Committee, Rail Infrastructure Corporation, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, South Sydney City Council, Woollahra Council*), further alterations to the project were proposed. These were detailed in the Supplementary Representations Report and released for public comment in November 2002.
- The RTA's Preferred Activity Report for the SEIS dated November 2002 included some further (minor) alterations to the traffic management plan that were promulgated in response to representations the RTA had received in response to the SEIS.
- The Minister for Planning gave his approval for the revised conditions to the Approved Activity in December 2002 (which is now described as the 'Preferred Activity').

All road changes, alterations and proposals were the responsibility of Government and, once established, formed the basis of the 'parameters' of the CCT project and the Project Deed. The road changes were detailed by the RTA as the proponent in the EIS, the SEIS, the Preferred Activity Report and through the planning approval from the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning.

### The Toll Price

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The base toll price of \$2.50 (based on 1999 figures) was inserted in the Project Deed by the RTA. Similarly, the decision to increase the toll price by 15 cents to fund necessary road works on Anzac Bridge was a decision made following agreement between RTA and CCM. CCM funded change orders associated with the CCT project, under the initiation and direction of the RTA, to permit the RTA to undertake the necessary road works on Anzac Bridge.

The current toll price includes a 10% GST component amounting to approximately 36 cents.



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## **Traffic Projections**

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Critics have alleged that it is, in fact, taxpayers who have borne the risk in relation to the Cross City Tunnel. Nothing is further from the truth. CCM has borne and will continue to bear all construction, design and patronage risk for the next 30 years.

While CCM accepts that it will take longer to achieve 'ramp-up' of patronage figures, CCM's original traffic projections were undertaken by professional and experienced consultants in this area. Their projections were similar to the RTA's projections.

Whether or not these projections are achieved is of little consequence to the Government or to the taxpayer as CCM carries the risk of patronage and not the Government or the taxpayer.

As a final note, in making these submissions and in responding to the questions on notice from the Committee, I note that CCM only came into existence on 16 December 2002. In relation to matters which occurred prior to its existence, the responses to the questions on notice are made on the basis of material and information provided to me.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Sansom'.

**Peter Sansom**

**Chief Executive Officer, CrossCity Motorway**

**18 January 2006**