

## **INQUIRY INTO HEALTH IMPACTS OF AIR POLLUTION IN THE SYDNEY BASIN**

**Organisation:** Lane Cove Municipal Council

**Name:** Clr Ian Longbottom

**Position:** Mayor

**Telephone:**

**Date Received:** 4/08/2006

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**Subject:**

**Summary**



**Office of the Mayor**

The Director  
 General Purpose Standing Committee No 2  
 Parliament House  
 Macquarie Street  
 SYDNEY NSW 2000

4<sup>th</sup> August 2006

Facsimile: 02 9230 3416

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Dear Madam Chair,

**Re: Inquiry into and Report on the Health Impacts of Air Pollution in the Sydney Basin**

This submission provides some information which the Committee may find useful in its inquiry into the Health Impacts from Air Pollution in the Sydney Basin, being examined by the General Purpose Standing Committee No 2.

Lane Cove Council has provided a very detailed submission to the Joint Select Committee for the Cross City Tunnel including the Lane Cove Tunnel. A number of issues raised are also of relevance to this inquiry.

Lane Cove has around 33,000 residents within a regional air stream which moves eastward and westward diurnally on a regular basis.

The air quality for Lane Cove along with Willoughby and North Sydney local government areas is influenced by a much higher proportion of vehicles per head of population compared to other local government areas.

For Lane Cove, the main contributors include:

- a) Pacific Highway and Mowbray Road at the eastern and northern boundaries;
- b) Epping Road and the Lane Cove Tunnel corridor when it opens, forming part of the Sydney orbital connecting Epping Road / M2 with Gore Hill Freeway; and
- c) Centennial Avenue and River Road as residential streets carrying significant levels of through traffic from Victoria Road via Burns Bay Road.

In the EIS for the Lane Cove Tunnel traffic growth of less than 1% has already proved to underestimate actual growth in traffic.

Documents recently provided by the Lane Cove Tunnel Company suggest that 2006 is the worst case year for air pollution. We strongly dispute that position. Whilst that was the position taken in the EIS, the base case financial model accepted by the RTA has the RTA EIS predictions for 2037 being reached by 2009.

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The financial viability from the base case financial model is predicted for average weekday traffic by 2016 on:-

- Eastbound traffic running at maximum capacity for 16 + hours every day between 5am and 9pm
- Access to the Westbound tunnel from the Pacific Highway running at or near capacity between 6am and 11pm
- 2.12 times the traffic volumes on M2/Epping Road from 105,000 vpd current to 210,000
- 2.19 times the traffic volumes on the Gore Hill Freeway (east of Reserve Road) to 207,000
- An increase in trucks westbound at 7.3% between 2006 and 2011 and 10.9% between 2012 and 2016.

At the Cross City Tunnel Enquiry relating to hearings for the Lane Cove Tunnel, Connector Motorways reaffirmed that they are confident that their traffic projections in the base case financial model will be realised. Such outcomes were not identified in the EIS and if realised, will congest surface roads and have further adverse air quality impacts well beyond the tunnel portals. This Council remains concerned about the health impacts from the concentrated emissions from the two air ventilation stacks so close to our residential and employment areas adding to double the current traffic levels by traffic induced into the corridor.

The western stack location was chosen because it was in an "Industrial Area". In fact its location is in the heart of the Lane Cove West Business Park employing 6,000 – 8,000 employees with high tech companies including Cochlear International only a few metres below the top of the western stack. Approval was given on a cross sectional area of 100m<sup>2</sup> and a minimum air flow of 5m/sec setting the minimum exit flow rate at 500m<sup>3</sup>/sec. The ventilation system as constructed is based on 60m<sup>2</sup> sectional area at the eastern stack and an exit velocity of 3m/sec, reducing the exit flow rate to 180m<sup>3</sup>/sec. Similarly for the western stack, the cross sectional area increases to 72m<sup>2</sup> with a minimum exit velocity of 3m. The localised health impacts have not and possibly cannot be assessed using available modelling but the health impacts from 2.5 times higher short term levels of concentrations in the air cannot be dismissed.

In 2004, 47% of trucks registered in the Sydney SD were more than 10 years old. A lot can be done and is being done to tackle air pollution from motor vehicles at the source. There is a role for Government to fast track the replacement of diesel trucks with cleaner vehicles over a 10-year period to eliminate all diesel vehicles not complying to current standards. The Government can insist that every vehicle is tested annually or biannually for compliance with maximum emission limits and require correction prior to vehicle registration. More locally, filtration of the Lane Cove Tunnel had the potential to remove particulate load from the atmosphere and from the in tunnel air to which tunnel users are exposed.

The mode shift to public transport needs to be made much more attractive. At this stage, NSW Transport cannot advise how many extra buses and extension to services are planned when the Lane Cove Tunnel opens. Bus patronage along the Epping Road corridor is around 160,000 passengers per week. Public transport

needs to be priced to attract more patronage and have capability greater than peak demand, be modern, reliable and on time. We are dismayed that public transport services to the Lane Cove West Business Park have been cut. This is the wrong direction. Travel smart programs involve education, promotion and incentives.

Having diesel-powered buses also sends a wrong message about the Government's commitment to a cleaner environment.

The Lane Cove Tunnel project includes a new bus interchange. Unfortunately its purpose is a glorified bus stop interchanging only passengers. As it is the last bus stop before the Gore Hill Freeway, carparking below or in the vicinity of the bus interchange could assist in reducing car trips into the City. More interchanges with ample carparking are needed at strategic locations on public transport routes within Sydney to keep car trips more local.

We have expressed our concerns that emissions from Lane Cove Tunnel has not assessed the tail pipe emissions for PM10, PM2.5 and PM1 as the designers – using PIARC tables - only assess particulates for non exhaust tail pipe emissions and that the ultrafine component from passenger cars has been ignored yet emissions from approx. 100 cars is equivalent to emissions from one truck.

Council shares the concerns expressed by Dr Ray Kearney in regard to ultrafine particles having a much larger surface area on a weight for weight basis when compared with PM<sub>10</sub>.

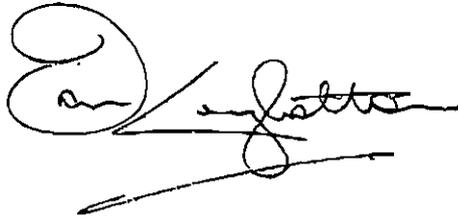
There is so much literature that links a rise in mortality with a rise in particulate emissions from motor vehicles. Why then has NSW Health sold out our community by failing to benchmark the health of this community before the tunnel opens and continue their study until the tunnel has reached its maximum capacity? The tunnel will open later this year and background data is only just being collected. With no seasonal background data and concluding while traffic chaos exists on Epping Road during the ramp up period, the health study being undertaken is deliberately designed to fail.

We have highlighted the stupidity of monitoring the air quality impacts from a point source against regional backgrounds as a basis for determining air quality impacts from road tunnels. We believe that it is analogous to having cigarette smoke blown in ones face for a period of time with a monitor in the room and using the results obtained from the monitor over 24 hours to determine actual harmful short term exposure.

It is a frightening statistic that more people die in Sydney from motor vehicle emissions than die in road accidents and that the associated health cost is in the order of \$1-1.5 billion. I trust that your enquiry will deliver outcomes that redress the harmful emissions from motor vehicles.

On a positive note, Lane Cove Council has recently placed on public exhibition our draft "Ambient Air Quality – Woodsmoke" policy. This policy reflects our community's desire "to improve ambient air quality within Lane Cove". This new policy formalises the pro-active work Lane Cove Council continues to undertake within our community to ensure that local air quality is enhanced and the subsequent health effects related to poor air quality minimised.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Longbottom', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Councillor Ian Longbottom  
**MAYOR**