

Submission
No 79

INQUIRY INTO CROSS CITY TUNNEL

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Theme:

Summary



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SUBMISSION
JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE
ON THE CROSS CITY TUNNEL
Inquiry into the Lane Cove Tunnel
In Particular Epping Road and Sam Johnson Way

Prepared for:

The Director

Joint Select Committee On the Cross City Tunnel

Legislative Council

Parliament House

Macquarie Street

Sydney NSW 2000

Prepared by:

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Waterloo

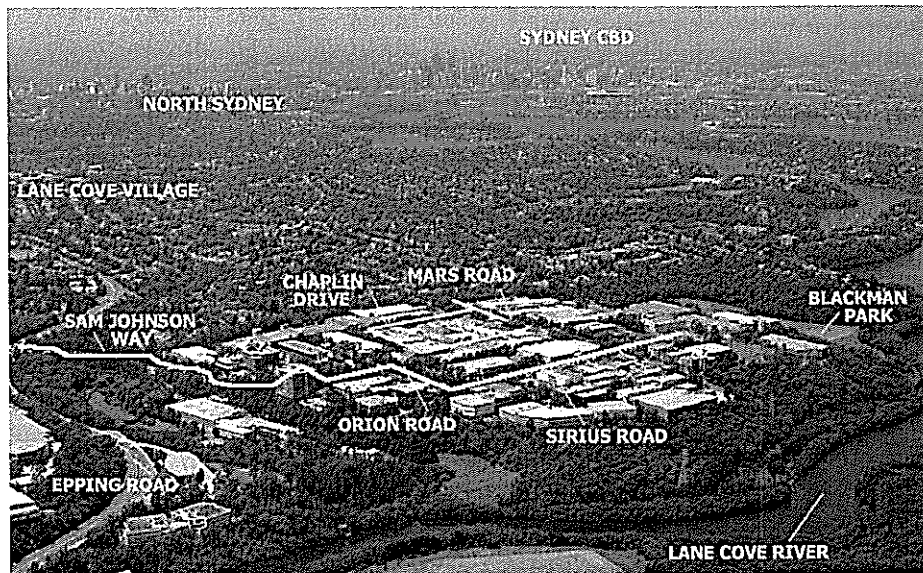
NSW 2017

May 2006

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Lane Cove West Business Group comprising a number of property owners and businesses in Lane Cove West Business Park (LCWBP) make this submission as they are deeply concerned as to the likely traffic **havoc and gridlock** that will result from the proposed changes to Epping Road following the opening of the Lane Cove tunnel.

The aerial below shows LCWBP and the only way in and out – Sam Johnson Way off Epping Road:



In essence, if Epping Road is reduced to one general traffic lane in each direction there will be **immediate traffic gridlock** and this will worsen with natural traffic growth.

The businesses in LCWBP have suffered from limited access for many years and were looking forward to the opening of the tunnel as it was assumed that the traffic snarls on Epping Road would be alleviated as through traffic between Gore Hill Freeway and the M2 and Macquarie Park/Ryde would utilise the tunnel. The **only** access in and out of LCWBP is from Epping Road via Sam Johnson Way.

In July 2005, following an exhibit of proposed landscaping works to Epping Rd as part of the tunnel contract, we were alerted to the fact that Epping Rd would be reduced to one general traffic lane, a dedicated bus lane and a dedicated cycleway. There would also be significant changes to how traffic accessed Epping Rd, both from the M2 (and then on to Mowbray Road and Pittwater Rd), and from the Gore Hill Freeway. The proposed changes are designed to funnel traffic into the tunnel and discourage motorists from using alternate routes by either preventing access to these routes or reducing their capacity so as to cause congestion.

It is a similar scenario to the Cross City tunnel.

The attachment "Epping Rd Vehicular Capacity" shows actual traffic counts on Epping Road taken in 2004 by traffic engineers Coulston Budd Hunt & Kaffes east and west of Sam Johnson Way. It shows that based on these 2004 traffic counts, and with **no allowance for traffic growth**, with one general traffic lane in each direction on Epping Road tunnel patronage would have to be at least 86% to avoid over capacity and serious congestion on Epping Road.

The EIS (Environmental Impact Statement), the RTA and the tunnel consortium predict **up to** a 60% fall in traffic on Epping Road after the tunnel opens. The maths is quite straight forward:

- 2004 peak eastbound AM traffic was 3,810 vehicle movements so 60% of this leaves 1,524 vehicles on the one remaining lane on Epping Road which is substantially more than its capacity of 1,300- 1,450 vehicles per hour;
- Allowing for 3%pa growth in traffic there will be 4,163 vehicle movements in 2007 resulting in gridlock and getting worse with each year of traffic growth.

The westbound traffic volumes paint an even bleaker picture.

- 2004 peak westbound PM traffic was 4,305 vehicle movements so 60% of this leaves 1,722 vehicles on the one remaining lane on Epping Road which is 19% more than its maximum capacity of 1,450 vehicles per hour;
- Allowing for 3%pa growth in traffic there will be 4,704 vehicle movements in 2007 resulting in 30% under capacity (congestion) and getting worse with each year of traffic growth.

Bear in mind that these figures assume the best case of 60% traffic reduction – anything less than this and the congestion gridlock will be worse.

The Lane Cove West Business Group seeks a sensible solution to the likely catastrophic impact that the Epping Rd changes will have on LCWBP as well as the Lane Cove shopping village in Longueville Road, access to Centennial Avenue and to residents who need to use Epping Road to access their homes.

We have made submissions to and had meetings with the RTA; in September 2005 we met with the then Minister Tripodi. We have also met with representatives of the Lane Cove Tunnel Consortium and of Leightons, the parent of Thiess John Holland. There is no argument that the tunnel itself will be a great asset to Sydney's road system. Our concern is **the reduction of Epping Rd from 3 to 1 lane of general traffic**, and the devastating impact the resultant traffic congestion will have on staff being able to access their workplace in LCWBP and of course essential goods deliveries, remembering that the only way in and out of LCWBP is from Epping Road via Sam Johnson Way.

It is considered essential there be two general traffic lane in each direction on Epping Rd after the tunnel opens, that the proposed cycleway should be relocated (it will be unsafe on Epping Rd). At the very least there should be no permanent works carried out to Epping Rd until the effects of the tunnel can be properly assessed. Indeed this has been put to the Consortium at a recent meeting and their response is that the RTA needs to be agreeable to the solution.

We ask that the Inquiry call on all parties (the RTA, Tunnel Consortium, Lane Cove Council and Lane Cove West Business Group) to convene and act to sort out this impending traffic and disaster and gridlock of the vital Northwest and Western corridors to the population growth areas of Sydney.

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- 2. Letters to the enquiry objecting to the proposed Epping Rd changes from businesses operating in Lane Cove West Business Park

1.0 INTRODUCTION

On behalf of the owners and occupiers whose businesses are located in Lane Cove West Business Park (LCWBP) we hereby request you to reconsider and modify the current proposed arrangement for Epping Road and the intersection of Sam Johnson Way (See Figure 1).

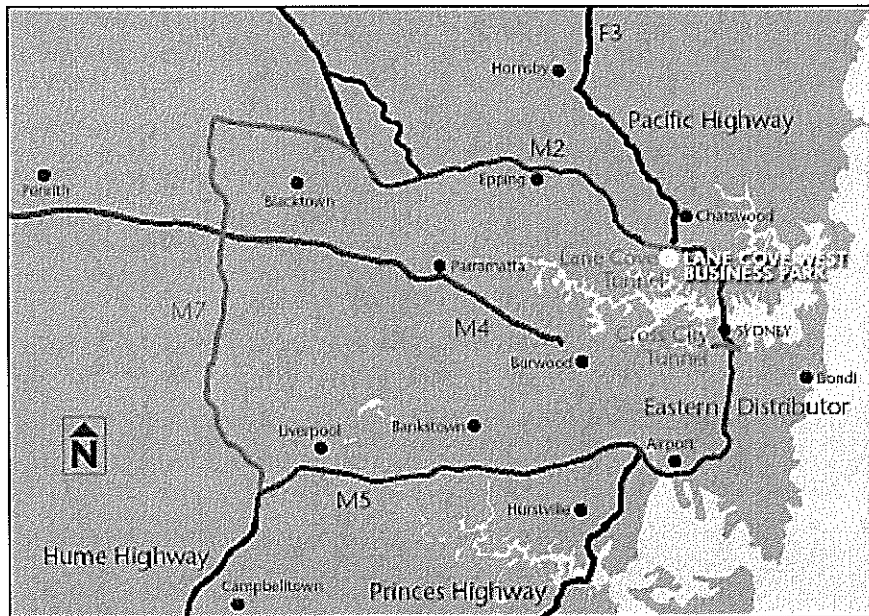


FIGURE 1: LOCATION PLAN

From the research undertaken by our team and the observations we have made of the functioning of Epping Road, we are firmly of the opinion that if the road works and narrowing of Epping Road and the limiting of access to Sam Johnson Way are to proceed as presently proposed it will have a seriously detrimental impact on the viability of the LCWBP and the jobs provided to over 6,000 people.

The LCWBP comprises many substantive businesses that include Cochlear, Samsung, Brother, SC Johnson, Motorola, Lego, Doubleday Australia, Microsearch, Sagem, Dade Bearing, Ford Land, Develco, Richard Heggie, Netcomm, Dermalogica, Kastle Systems, Cryocite, Shriro, Abbott, Storage King, Neutrogena, Logica, and Coffey Engineers just to mention a few. These businesses provide crucial goods and services to the metropolitan area and beyond. Any impact on those businesses will have a ripple effect on other businesses in wider Sydney.

Letters of objection to the proposed Epping road changes from many of these businesses are attached in Appendix 2.

These businesses combine to provide an important employment zone in the metropolitan area. Currently these businesses employ over 6,000 people in LCWBP and there is potential for this number to grow considerably in the next 10 years. Any impact on the LCWBP and individual businesses will have a direct impact on employment, which is not in the public interest.

We respectfully request that the Inquiry note that vehicles travelling to and from the LCWBP cannot use the Lane Cove Tunnel and therefore rely on Epping Road and Sam Johnson Way as their only form of access. If Epping Road is reduced to one lane as presently proposed then access at Sam Johnson Way is also reduced there will be a catastrophic impact on LCWBP.

In our submission, Epping Road needs to be at least two lanes wide in each direction and the present access at Sam Johnson Way needs to be at least maintained and desirably improved.

In this document we will provide the Inquiry with:

1. The established businesses in the Lane Cove West Business Park;
2. The peak vehicle flows entering and leaving the Lane Cove West Business Park;
3. The perceived problems that will result from the road works currently proposed for Epping Road and Sam Johnson Way;
4. A substantiation of the likely problems based on actual traffic counts; and,
5. Our conclusion recommends changes to the chanalisation of Epping Road and Sam Johnson Way.

We are hopeful that you will be able to give your favourable consideration to our submission which is critical to the livelihood of many thousands of people.

2.0 ESTABLISHED BUSINESSES IN LANE COVE WEST BUSINESS PARK

The Lane Cove West Business Park comprises a number of high profile companies that provide essential goods and services to the metropolitan area and include the following:

Cochlear, Samsung, Brother, SC Johnson, Motorola, Lego, Doubleday Australia, Microsearch, Sagem, Dade Bearing, Ford Land, Develco, Richard Heggie, Netcomm, Dermalogica, Kastle Systems, Cryocite, Shriro, Abbott, Storage King, Neutrogena, Logica, and Coffey Engineers (See Figure 2).

The Business Park employs approximately 6,000 people, the majority of whom drive to their place of employment from their homes in Lane Cove Local Government Area (LGA) and their various places of residence throughout the metropolitan area.

If the plans for the narrowing of Lane Cove Road proceed in its present form there will be a substantial impact on the Business Park that will cause hardship for businesses; impede the efficient delivery of goods, force some businesses to close and reduce future growth for the park, which will result in a substantial loss of employment.



FIGURE 2: ESTABLISHED BUSINESS PARK

3.0 EXISTING TRAFFIC FLOW

Actual traffic counts were undertaken in 2004 by Colston Budd Hunt & Kaffes.

The 2004 traffic counts identified that the through vehicular east bound traffic movement on Epping Road in the AM peak was 2,725 although of these, the number of vehicles with an origin or destination in the Lane Cove West Business Park or at a location along Centennial Avenue was 840.

Similarly these counts show that the west bound movement using Epping Road in the PM peak was 3,270 vehicles with 850 vehicles having an origin or destination in the Lane Cove West Business Park or in Centennial Avenue.

On information provided by Lane Cove Council it would seem that approximately 10% of the east bound traffic in the AM peak has a destination in Longueville Road. If these figures are correct, we are advised that they add a further 273 vehicles onto the Epping Road traffic that cannot use the Lane Cove Tunnel.

Accordingly, in the AM and PM peak in 2004 there were potentially over 1,000 vehicles using Epping Road who either had an origin or destination in the Lane Cove West Business Park or nearby localities. These vehicles will not use the Lane Cove Tunnel after it is opened due to their destination and remain as the base number of vehicles on Epping Road.

Sam Johnson Way presently permits a free flowing left turn slip lane for west bound traffic throughout the day. Also, the signalised intersection facilitates a right turn movement into and out of Sam Johnson Way in the AM and PM peaks.

If the capacity of this intersection is reduced in either the AM or PM peak, together with the substantial reduction in the capacity of Epping Road, the access to the Lane Cove Business Park will be greatly inhibited.

See the table in Appendix 1 for traffic data.

4.0 THE PERCEIVED PROBLEMS THAT WILL RESULT FROM CURRENT ROADWORKS

In light of research undertaken, the tabling of Parliamentary Reports relating to tunnel costings and the observations of other toll road take-up rates in Sydney, in our respectful submission, the RTA, Thiess John Holland and the State Government will receive a serious rebuttal if the Lane Cove Tunnel project opens in its present form.

From the information available to us, Epping Road surface modifications that will result in State Government embarrassment and public outcry with extensive delays and access problems may include the following:

1. The narrowing of Epping Road to one through lane pinch points in the vicinity from Mowbray Road West and Centennial Avenue is unacceptable. Single lanes would not cope with the base capacity of vehicles resulting protracted delays and the prevention of vehicles accessing LCWBP and other destinations along Epping Road.
2. The provision of a separate bike lane in areas where pedestrian and vehicular conflicts are obvious and must eventually result in a serious accident;
3. The need to cater for vehicles on Epping Road that have an origin and destination in the Lane Cove West Business Park. If sufficient capacity does not exist on Epping Road to meet the needs of the local demand then shops and businesses will close in these designated employment zones to the detriment of the community at large;
4. The deletion of the westbound left turn movement from Epping Road into Sam Johnson Way will reduce the capacity of traffic from the east to gain access to the Business Park.

In our opinion, research would suggest that the above problems are merely the tip of the iceberg and even if a significant take-up of the tunnel was achieved, then traffic flows and the viability of businesses in the town centre and Business Park would be severely affected.

5.0 JUSTIFICATION FOR IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS

Colston Budd Hunt & Kaffes actual data

The Lane Cove Tunnel EIS was prepared in 2001 for the RTA. This report contained traffic predictions for the year 2006 for Epping Road. Traffic counts were taken in 2004 by Colston Budd Hunt & Kaffes for Epping Road and have been used as a comparison for this exercise.

The 2004 figures show that the use of the tunnel upon opening would have to achieve at least 86% take-up of total traffic movements during the east bound AM peak and west bound PM peak.

Further, the Colston Budd Hunt & Kaffes figures do not account for any growth in traffic movements between 2004 and the tunnel opening (due early 2007) and are very conservative in this instance. Indeed actual counts undertaken in 2002 (as published by the RTA of the M2 motorway traffic figures) were already 16% greater than the EIS predictions for 2006. The traffic predictions used to justify the usability and public benefit of the Lane Cove Tunnel do, in our opinion seriously underestimate the growth of traffic in this area and overestimate the take-up of the tunnel.

The through am east bound vehicle movement (2004) without allowing for growth, was 2,725 vehicles. With a 60% takeup rate in the tunnel there would be a residual of over 1,900 vehicles still using Epping Road which exceeds capacity. At or near capacity if there were a breakdown or accident in the system, the whole eastbound movement would be gridlocked in minutes, potentially for hours (See Appendix 1).

Similarly, in regard to the pm westbound movements in the afternoon peak there are at least 850 vehicles that need to use Epping Road. With through vehicular movements of 3,270 (2004), without taking into account any growth, at a 60% takeup rate of the tunnel, would leave a residual 2,158 vehicles using Epping Road, which substantially exceeds capacity.

Even with an 80% take up rate in the tunnel, we doubt the ability of Epping Road to cope with local traffic and residue traffic with the one-lane 'pinch-points' as currently proposed (See Appendix 1).

These figures indicate that at no time during the peak hours would Epping Road run below capacity, regardless of whether the tunnel achieved a high take-up rate of 80%.

Lane Cove Tunnel Base Model Data

The Base Case Financial Model traffic figures tabled in the NSW Parliament, suggests that in 2016 an eastbound total estimated traffic count of 74,800 vehicles per day and westbound 84,700 vehicles per day needs to be achieved to satisfy the economic parameters for the tunnel. With two tunnel lanes, this means that eastbound traffic would need to run a capacity of 4,400 vehicles per hour between the hours of 6.00am and 7.00 pm (every day of the week) to achieve anywhere near these figures. This is simply not achievable. The capacity for westbound traffic is potentially more achievable, due to the third traffic lane for part of the tunnel, based on the rate of 6,250 vehicles per hour. However, westbound traffic will still need to run near capacity for six or seven hours a day.

The Sydney Morning Herald publicly shames the RTA regarding the Cross City Tunnel road changes, claiming that they were "...negligent in not thoroughly checking [traffic modelling counts] before proposing a whole range of road closures" [Anne Davies, SMH, 6.3.06: 2]. The RTA and the Lane Cove Tunnel Consortium have an opportunity to reconsider the proposed Epping Road modifications before it too becomes a political crisis.

6.0 SUGGESTED CHANALISATION FOR EPPING ROAD AND SAM JOHNSON WAY

In our opinion reducing Epping Road to one lane at specific locations for east bound and west bound traffic will be disastrous for vehicles that have an origin or destination in the Lane Cove West Business Park, Centennial Avenue or the Lane Cove Shopping Centre. Even with the small residual through vehicular movement, one lane of traffic on Epping Road would regularly reach capacity and in our opinion gridlock in the AM and PM peak.

The traffic counts undertaken by Colston Budd in 2004 and the modelling undertaken by the RTA does not seem to have factored into a growth of traffic to the Lane Cove West Business Park or other identified locations that cannot use the Lane Cove Tunnel. Accordingly, with a normal assumed growth of 3% the problems on Epping Road will exacerbate over time.

In order to accommodate the obvious traffic capacity Epping Road must retain, at least, two lanes of traffic at all locations. The provision of three lanes at intersections is seen as desirable and should be retained, however, without the provision of two continuous lanes; the benefits gained from these flared intersections will be lost at the existing one lane pinch points. Accordingly, we would submit that the provision of a minimum of two lanes is critical to the ongoing viability of the Lane Cove Business Park and other businesses in the locality that cannot use the Lane Cove Tunnel to their respective origins and destinations.

Sam Johnson Way presently has three egress lanes and two ingress lanes with a slip lane that provides a continuous left turn for west bound traffic. The modified design that was recently announced retains the three lanes for egressing vehicles and provides for one right turn lane and one right turn and through vehicle lane for east bound traffic. However, the "left turn at any time with care" opportunity for west bound traffic into the Lane Cove West Business Park is proposed to be eliminated.

The left turn movement should be continued. To retain this left turn movement, even if it is signalised, and allow for the two right turn lanes in the Lane Cove West Business Park, it may be necessary to construct a third lane for left turn egressing vehicles. This would require a relatively small amount of roadway and would not involve any major cost.

This would result in the retention of the existing three lanes of traffic exiting the Lane Cove West Business Park and the provision of three ingress lanes to facilitate right and left turn movements.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The Lane Cove West Business Park is a somewhat unique entity that has been established for a number of years. Although it is a major provider of goods and services throughout the metropolitan area it relies on direct and sole access from Epping Road and Sam Johnson Way, there is no other means of access. Business proprietors, employees and customers need to access Epping Road and Sam Johnson Way. They cannot utilise the Lane Cove Tunnel.

Accordingly, if the ability to utilise Epping Road via Sam Johnson Way is substantially inhibited it will have a substantial impact on the viability of the Business Park and the 6,000 jobs offered by the various companies.

We respectfully request the Inquiry to call for change to the proposal from Epping Road and Sam Johnson Way as a matter of urgency. Our primary submissions in respect of this matter are as follows:

1. That Epping Road be a minimum of two lanes wide for through vehicles and turning vehicles between Mowbray Road and Centennial Avenue;
2. That the cycleway be relocated away from Epping Road on safer alternate routes that have previously been identified by Lane Cove Council;
3. That professional cyclists be permitted to share the bus lane;
4. That a westbound left turn lane from Epping Road into Sam Johnson Way be included as an additional lane at the signalised intersection.

Our secondary submission is that in light of the changes needed to Epping Road and its intersections due to the introduction of the Lane Cove Tunnel, that the chanalisation and surface roadworks be installed on a temporary basis. This is in order to allow Thiess John Holland to properly assess the take-up of the tunnel and the potential impacts on surrounding areas. During this period, it would be possible to test different road chanalisation options with a view to determining the most appropriate prior to constructing the permanent surface roadworks.

We trust that you will give our proposal your serious consideration and we look forward to your response at your earliest convenience. If you wish to discuss these matters further with our representatives please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully

Josef Reisinger (Develco) Geoff Ford (Ford Land) John McBain (Century Funds Management)

On behalf of the Lane Cove West **Business Group**

APPENDIX A - TRAFFIC STUDY DATA

2004 EPPING ROAD TRAFFIC COUNT AND IMPACT OF TUNNEL TAKE UP

Epping Road East Bound AM Peak

Year	Growth Rate	No. of Vehicles immediately west of Sam Johnson Way on Epping Rd	No. Vehicles utilising Epping Rd with destination at LCW business park, Tantallon Rd Centennial Ave	No. Through Vehicles without a destination between Sam Johnson Way & Centennial Ave	Estimated no. of vehicles with a destination in the vicinity of Lane Cove Shopping Centre	Total No. of vehicles on Epping Rd with the potential to use the tunnel between Gore Hill & Sam Johnson Way	Percentage Take-up in the Tunnel								
							A	B	C (A-B)	D (10% x C)	E (C-D)	10%	20%	30%	40%
2004	0%	3565	840	2725	273	2453	3520	3075	2859	2584	2339	2094	1848	1603	1358
2005	3%	3672	865	2807	281	2526	3419	3167	2914	2662	2409	2156	1904	1651	1398
2006	3%	3782	891	2891	289	2602	3522	3262	3002	2741	2481	2221	1961	1701	1440
2007	3%	3896	918	2978	298	2680	3628	3360	3092	2824	2556	2288	2020	1752	1484
2008	3%	4012	945	3067	307	2760	3756	3460	3184	2908	2632	2356	2080	1804	1528
2009	3%	4133	974	3159	316	2843	3849	3564	3280	2996	2711	2427	2143	1858	1574
2010	3%	4257	1003	3254	325	2928	3964	3671	3378	3085	2793	2500	2207	1914	1621
2011	3%	4385	1033	3351	335	3016	4083	3781	3480	3178	2876	2575	2273	1971	1670
2012	3%	4516	1064	3452	345	3107	4205	3895	3584	3273	2963	2652	2341	2031	1720

Epping Road West Bound PM Peak

Year	Growth Rate	No. of Vehicles immediately west of Sam Johnson Way on Epping Road	No. Vehicles utilising Epping Rd with origin at LCW business park, Tantallon Rd Centennial Ave	No. Through Vehicles without an origin between Centennial Ave & Sam Johnson Way	Estimated no. of vehicles with an origin in the vicinity of Lane Cove Shopping Centre	Total No. of vehicles on Epping Rd with the potential to use the tunnel between Gore Hill & Sam Johnson Way	Percentage Take-up in the Tunnel								
							A	B	C (A-B)	D (10% x C)	E (C-D)	10%	20%	30%	40%
2004	0%	4120	850	3270	327	2943	3826	3531	3257	2943	2649	2354	2060	1766	1471
2005	3%	4244	876	3368	337	3031	3940	3637	3334	3031	2728	2425	2122	1819	1515
2006	3%	4371	902	3469	347	3122	4059	3746	3434	3122	2810	2498	2185	1873	1561
2007	3%	4502	929	3573	357	3216	4180	3859	3537	3216	2894	2572	2251	1929	1608
2008	3%	4637	957	3680	368	3312	4306	3975	3645	3312	2981	2650	2318	1987	1656
2009	3%	4776	985	3791	379	3412	4455	4094	3753	3412	3070	2729	2388	2047	1706
2010	3%	4919	1015	3905	390	3514	4568	4217	3865	3514	3162	2811	2460	2108	1757
2011	3%	5067	1045	4022	402	3620	4705	4343	3981	3619	3257	2895	2533	2171	1810
2012	3%	5219	1077	4142	414	3728	4846	4473	4101	3728	3355	2982	2609	2237	1864

Indicates that Epping Road is running over the one-lane capacity of 1450 vehicles per hour

Indicates that Epping Road is running over the two lane capacity of 2900 vehicles per hour

APPENDIX B

Letters of Support

SC Johnson
Doubleday Australia.
Netcomm
Dermalogica
Energy Industries Superannuation Scheme
Ducru Pty Ltd
Century Funds Management
Head Office Group

Ian Longbottom – Mayor - Lane Cove Council
Gladys Berejiklian – State MP for Willoughby
Urban Development Institute of Australia
NSW Urban taskforce