

INQUIRY INTO CROSS CITY TUNNEL

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Theme:

Summary

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Wednesday, May 24

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Residents of Parkes Road, Artarmon, near the Gore Hill Freeway approach to the LCT are facing a "quadruple whammy" of increased traffic noise, even worse noise from the LCT construction and exposure to dirt and dust pollution as well as excessive toxic emissions from the tunnel.

But all our requests for mitigation against the noise and the dirt and the dust in the form of a Perspex noise barrier on top of the existing noise walls on the north side of Gore Hill Freeway between Reserve Road bridge and North Shore Railway bridge; and double glazing of exposed windows and sliding doors have been flatly refused.

Moreover, it is well documented that the NSW Government is refusing to install appropriate filtration system inside the tunnel to reduce toxic emissions despite an offer of \$10,000 towards such system from the Federal Government.

Noise generation

- 1) The residents of Parkes Road have been assaulted by construction noise over the past 18 months and have never been consulted, offered protection from, or compensated for the noise generated by the LCT construction. We are being exposed to excessive noise from trucks, drilling, breaking of concrete and reverse vehicle alarms working on Gore Hill Freeway from as early as 7am in the morning to past midnight at times.
- 2) We question the community consultation involved which permits the developers to generate such excessive construction noise from 7am, when residents are not allowed to make any noise before 8am. We also question the community consultation involved for regularly granting permission for construction work past midnight.
- 3) With regard to traffic noise, we also question the method used to measure the noise. We understand acoustic measures were taken from the façade of our building. We demand these measurements be made at the boundary of our property to Gore Hill Freeway.
- 4) A report by the CSIRO Division of Atmospheric Research (Daily Telegraph, 23 May 2006) for the Air Quality Community Consultation Committee estimates RTA's modelling has underestimated traffic congestion in the tunnel by up to 20%, further strengthening our demand for double glazing and a Perspex noise barrier.

- 5) We have it on good authority the RTA and TJH have tried to suppress the CSIRO report, which warns traffic and pollution have been grossly underestimated, by refusing the author Peter Manins to be present at the meeting where the report was presented and also making him tone it down.
- 6) TJH's reason for refusing to install a Perspex noise barrier system on top of the northern noise walls of Gore Hill Freeway between Reserve Road bridge and North Shore Railway bridge is that it is not "cost effective" to put it on top of a 3.8m noise wall. That measurement is incorrect. Our noise walls are not much taller than 2.5m. We have been told by experts that at the right height and with an angled panel at the top, a Perspex noise barrier system can very effectively deflect traffic noise away from us.

Air Pollution

- 7) Despite all the measures said to have been taken to minimise dirt and dust pollution from the project, they are not sufficient to protect us. Our exposure to the dirt and dust pollution has increased three-fold since the start of the construction, already causing sinus problems among the residents and wear and tear on property and cars.
- 8) The CSIRO report estimates air pollution will be 50% higher than the tunnel is designed for, which calls for appropriate filtration system inside the tunnel to protect us from the health hazards of toxic emissions over Artarmon from the vent stacks.

Breach of conditions of approval

- 9) The Lane Cove Tunnel builders Thiess John Holland have total disregard for the residents living near the construction sites and have been in breach of several of its conditions of approval for the development of the Lane Cove Tunnel granted by the Minister of Planning by:
 - (i) routinely conducting activities which result in "impulsive or tonal noise generation" before 8am. They use vehicles which sound reverse vehicle alarms, generating "impulsive and tonal noises". While we realise this is necessary for work safety, using vehicles which generate such noise is still in breach of the conditions.
 - (ii) The project's Independent Community Liaison Representative is far from independent: a) the unit communicates on Thiess John Holland (TJH) and Lane Cove Tunnel Project letterhead in letters signed by Sue Netterfield, the TJH spokesperson. b) The so-called independent representative refers to TJH as "we".
 - (iii) The so-called independent community liaison representative acts as a gatekeeper to the independent environment management representative, refusing to give out any name or contact details to the public.

- (iv) Acoustic measurements show some of the residents will be exposed to excessive traffic noise. Although we have a right to noise mitigation treatment, we are being forced to sign a Deed of Agreement, which "releases TJH unconditionally and forever from all claims and causes of actions against TJH in respect of the carrying out of the (LCT) works". We have legal advise against signing under such terms as it would mean signing away any rights for further noise mitigation treatment should new assessments at a later stage indicate noise levels are exceeding target levels, or to seek compensation should any of our units be damaged or destroyed as a result of the LCT works. The result is we have been left without any noise mitigation.
- (v) We question TJH's noise measurements for their apparent randomness. Some residents have been offered noise mitigation in the form of air filtration units, while others, who live at the same level and have the same exposure to Gore Hill Freeway, have not.
- (vi) We question the adequacy of these air filtration units, which rely on "soundproof" windows to offer proper protection from the noise, without the complement of double glazing, particularly in view of the CSIRO report. Our windows and sliding doors are far from soundproof.
- (vii) Our strata managers asked for a structural report of our building after residents found a sharp increase in new cracks emerging following the start of the LCT works. The inspection was in February and we have yet to receive any report. The building in Lane Cove which collapsed started with the appearance of hairline cracks in the wall. We therefore demand a report as soon as possible. Given TJH's tendency to suppress reports unfavourable to them, we ask this report be independently prepared.

We have the right to expect adequate protection from the detrimental environmental impact caused by the Lane Cove Tunnel such as construction noise, excessive traffic noise, dirt and dust pollution and emission of toxic fumes from vent stacks; and threats to our property in the form of:

- a) **Double glazing of exposed windows and sliding doors to complement the installation of air filtration units.**
- b) **Perspex noise barrier system on top of noise walls along the north side of Gore Hill Freeway between Reserve Road bridge and North Shore Railway bridge.**
- c) **Appropriate filtration system inside the tunnel to reduce toxic emissions from vent stacks.**
- d) **An independent structural report on our building.**