

INQUIRY INTO ROAD TOLLING

Name: Mr Michael Fogarty

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Submission to Upper House Committee sitting on Tollways.

Introduction

My name is Michael Fogarty resident of Blacktown for thirty odd years and user of M2,M7 M5 tollways.

My first exposure to tollways was the M2 followed by M7 both local to myself.

In the early days they fulfilled my travelling needs admirably at a reasonable cost however I wish to submit the following comments for consideration by your Committee.

Tolling Charges

We have seen contracts signed off allowing tolling companies to give themselves increased revenues based upon the same roadway without any added value to users. I note that these companies have also engineered their accounting structures to be lowest or minimalist tax payers?

Tollway Access

As most other facilities have limits upon the number of patrons to safely use and enjoy facilities why is it that our tollways have been allowed to operate without restriction to access once the current level of users impacts upon the very purpose of their construction? Once the average road speed falls below that users are prepared to use the tollway as a compromise between toll cost and travel time there should be automatic reductions of their tolls whilst suffering loss of speed or time OR in the alternative physical barriers be lowered to restrict access until the tollways clear and road user speeds increase?

Pensioner concessions

In creating tollways many usual routes have been modified or removed forcing road users onto tollways. There is an increasing number of motorists unable to use tollways because they cannot afford or warrant allocating their small pensions to paying for tolls.

Socially it is unacceptable that whilst enjoying concessions upon public transport systems why should tollway companies be exempt from providing pensioners a similar concession particularly as State governments are encouraging the creation of tollways as be 'de rigeur' for moving around our State?

Impact upon local communities

Does any tollway pay or contribute any rate or tax to local government based upon the use of the land within the various local government areas used? If not why not? It would appear to me that users should pay without passing their cost onto tollway users particularly as tollway companies pay little or no income tax and therefore no contribution to the structures that exist allowing them to peacefully enjoy the security of tenure and incomes from their businesses?

Current situation

It appears to me that whilst tollways have a purpose within our communities their current unfettered access, cost of tolls , failure to provide speedy cost effective travel have become a regular commuters nightmare upon a trajectory which will result in massive waste of users money and time questioning the very economics upon which they were originally created.

The common good test is not being met as thousands of commuters spend their time paying for a queuing exercise just to get to work or from point A to point B safely and in time?

Thanking you for your kind attention

Michael Fogarty