

## **INQUIRY INTO ROAD TOLLING**

**Name:** Mr Peter Hehir  
**Date received:** 28 February 2017

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Dear Sir/Madam

Please accept this submission on tolls & acknowledge receipt of same.

- The tolls as they are proposed punish low income earners, some of whom will have to work longer hours at their present job, if that is possible, or get a second job, if they can find one, just so they can afford to pay the tolls to get to & from work. Those in the west who have no access to public transport have no other alternative but to rat run. A worker on a low income will have to find an extra \$9,000 per annum to have sufficient after tax income just to afford the tolls.
- Under the proposals for tolling WestConnex toll roads, the tolls will unfairly hit lower income users in Sydney's west. The average wage is \$600 per week. Tolls are estimated to cost \$120 per week for a commuter from, for example, Campbelltown, by the time the toll roads are completed in approximately 2023. This is clearly unsustainable and inequitable.
- Aside from the fact that the best way to remove traffic is to provide proper public transport alternatives, the fact that the tolls will only serve to enrich a private company (Transurban), is an example of cynical planning. Robbing the poor to enrich the rich is hardly the Australian way. It is a long way from a 'fair go' & reeks of social injustice.
- The need to avoid tolls will create further gridlock. WestConnex's own reports acknowledge that many roads will be worse off if WestConnex is built. When the tolls start on the currently-'free' section of the M4, drivers will begin to understand the true cost of these roads.
- We pay for the use of the roads many times over. Our taxes built the roads & are now building the tollways. Our taxes will underwrite any losses. We are paying for the lost opportunity of NOT spending the money now, before Sydney becomes even bigger, on public transport; AND we will pay way more than we can afford to use the roads, with the cost increasing at 4% a year while our wages decrease or remain at an all-time low. This multiplying effect is compounded by the fact that it is proposed to actually decrease lanes in existing roads, in order to force people onto tolled roads.
- With the proposed Iron Cove Tunnel there will be five outbound lanes merging with two on the Iron Cove Bridge. Two from the tunnel & three on Victoria Road. This makes no sense & will obviously worsen the present traffic choke point. Clearly this, (like the reduction of lanes on Parramatta Road), is obviously calculated to gridlock Victoria Road, again forcing commuters to avoid that route & thus drive them into the tunnels. Yet another example that illustrates why toll roads are a mean, vindictive & regressive step.
- If commuters were provided with efficient, accessible & cost effective public transport, there would be no need to build tollways. Only those needing their vehicles for work or to transport goods or people such as the elderly or the incapacitated would need to use the roads.
- WestConnex, as it is currently proposed, is a transparent exercise that will not only worsen the current road situation but will pour toll profits into multinational companies for decades to come, to the detriment of millions of Australians. Obviously the lack of public transport alternatives is clearly designed to ensure that more money ends up in the hands of those same companies.

The solution is simple. Provide Sydney with public transport. Give the roads back to the people & dispense with tolls altogether!

Peter Hehir