

**Submission
No 199**

INQUIRY INTO ROAD TOLLING REGIMES

Name: Mr Anoulack Chanthivong MP

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Anoulack Chanthivong MP

MEMBER FOR MACQUARIE FIELDS

Submission to the Legislative Council Inquiry into road tolling regimes

6 July 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on behalf of my constituents to the Legislative Council Inquiry into road tolling regimes.

Motorists in my electorate of Macquarie Fields are adversely affected by the Liberal Government's unfair tolling agenda, particularly on the M5 South West Motorway and M5 East Motorway.

The toll on the M5 South West Motorway was supposed to end in 2026 when the road was fully paid. But the Liberal Government sold the rights to toll the M5 to Transurban, meaning drivers will be forced to keep paying the M5 toll until 2060.

Next, the Liberal Government targeted drivers on the M5 East. The M5 East tunnels had been toll-free for 20 years since it opened in 2001. However, in 2020 the Liberal Government allowed tolling giant Transurban to impose a new toll on an old road. Motorists are now forced to pay \$7.23 one way in tolls on a road that had been free.

In late 2017, more than 10,000 residents signed a Parliamentary petition calling on the Liberal Government to rule out a new toll on the M5 South West after 2026.

In 2020, more than 10,000 residents signed a Parliamentary petition calling on the Liberal Government to not impose an unfair new toll on the M5 East.

So far, the Liberal Government has chosen to ignore both those calls for help from drivers in south-west Sydney.

Many constituents have contacted my office to detail the financial impact on the Liberal Government's tolling regime on household budgets that are already stretched.

I have included a small selection of comments from my constituents below to highlight the plight of motorists in south-west Sydney:

"I emailed some time ago about how the m5 tunnel toll was costing me precious time with my family as it added 15 to 30 minutes each way to avoid paying the toll. Well I gave in and left that job in Maroubra Junction after 10 years I gave up and found a job closer to home with no tolls whatsoever. I'm getting paid a lot less money now but the time I'm spending with my two young children makes up for it. The toll was something so simple but it was giving me anxiety and affected me badly."

"Not only in recent times have we been hit with another toll for an existing road that's been there for 20 years, they are now increasing the toll pricing again. It's hard enough

trying to survive on low income in today's climate, with wage freezers due to COVID-19 yet all or bills and tolls continue to rise."

"Southwest Sydney, especially Macarthur has been isolated from the rest of Sydney by numerous tolls. You can't go in any direction other than south without being hit by a road toll. A trip from Campbelltown to Gosford and back will cost a ridiculous \$40.38. The Premier has said that we don't have to use the new toll roads if we don't want to but what she really means is new infrastructure is only for the wealthy."

"Where do they think we get money to pay for these tolls? Every new road has a toll and they have the hide to say they are building better roads and interchanges for us... because they know that we have to pay tolls to go anywhere nowadays!"

"I and many others see this [M5 East toll] as a new toll on an old road. It's simply taxation by other means. This is yet another example of PPP which appears to have a disadvantage to public road users I have used the M5 tunnel for many years. Now I'm expected to pay to use something I didn't have to pay for. Why? I'm receiving no perceivable benefit or upgrade. Nothing extra on top of existing, for a new toll."

"If you see the cost to use the M5 tunnel for a month it's approximately \$450.00 extra cost for everyone and it's really difficult to pay \$15.00 every day to go from home to work and return every day. So my concern is that people like us, whose basic fortnight pay is \$1500.00, how he or she would be able to survive?"

The above comments are a brief insight into the frustration and angst felt by motorists in my electorate who have been unfairly affected by the Liberal Government's tolling regime.

When it comes to road tolls, the message from my electorate to the Liberal Government has been clear: Do not make it more expensive to go to work. Do not sign corporate backroom deals with tolling giants that hit the hip pockets of hardworking families in south-west Sydney.

Thank you again for the opportunity to write a submission for the Legislative Council Inquiry into road tolling regimes.

I will always stand up for my electorate and fight for our fair share.

Yours sincerely,

Anoulack Chanthivong MP
Member for Macquarie Fields