

## INQUIRY INTO ROAD TOLLING REGIMES

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

I am writing to highlight my concerns regarding the current road tolling regimes for motorways in Sydney.

I am a resident in the Inner West and for the past ten years I have been travelling to Granville every Sunday to my place of worship. I welcome the significant upgrades to the M4 motorway in particular the widening and new tunnels constructed (M4 east extension). It is fantastic to see the improvement and investment in this crucial piece of infrastructure and also in other parts of Sydney.

Sadly, this is the only positive thing I have to say about the toll roads. Ever since the toll was re-introduced for the M4, I have had to pay nearly 100 dollars in tolls per month just to drive on this 8km stretch of road (around \$10 dollars for the round trip). The current tolls CANNOT be considered good value for money for motorists. If I was commuting from the west to the CBD every day in the working week, how can the tolls be considered affordable? I would be paying around \$220-370 per month which is absolutely absurd.

I understand the enormous costs of improving this motorway and that this has to be recovered, and Transurban is there to make money from operating the toll roads.

However, the excessive costs of the toll pricing is driving a large volume of traffic onto Parramatta Road during peak hours, leading to excessive congestions and gridlock in Burwood/Strathfield, Lidcombe and Granville. The motorway on the other hand is not utilised to its full potential because motorists are effectively priced out. People are now locked out of using this fantastic piece of infrastructure because they cannot afford it.

Based on my motoring experience, very little has been done to address these congestions. In relation to the M4 entry point at Strathfield, it is not uncommon for traffic to build up for 1.5km because there is only a single lane for motorists continuing onto Parramatta Road (and two lanes to turn right onto the M4 Motorway). Similarly I have also seen regular and excessive congestions in the Granville area during peak hour. You can see this on Google map traffic.

And herein lies the problem. The original M4 expansion was designed to alleviate traffic on Parramatta Road, however the current toll pricing as made the situation worse during peak hours. What is the point of expanding the lanes on the M4 if motorists are priced out from using the motorway? Motorists who cannot afford the tolls are now given no alternate options, they are forced onto Parramatta Road and their trips take much longer because of the congestion.

The NSW Government and the toll road operator should be actively encouraging motorists to use the motorway and to improve patronage. In fact I believe the NSW Government should set targets on patronage levels. The tolls should be made more affordable (I believe the tolls should be at least halved to encourage more drivers to use the M4). It is quite evident that the current M4 motorway is under-utilised because a lot of motorists cannot afford the excessive toll costs. Other measures such as peak and non-peak pricing could also be explored, alternatively a discount should be introduced for regular users of the toll e.g. a weekly toll cap after 3 return trips (free for the remainder of week).

I urge this committee to look into this matter, as we will be paying the WestConnex tolls until 2060.