

TUNNEL REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER 2020 P & C MEETING

1. The submissions in reply to the Government's Tunnel EIS are still with the Department of Transport for reply.
2. The process in general terms is that from her the Department of Transport replies to the submissions and then the EIS, submissions and replies go to the Department of Planning for determination on whether the proposals are approved or not. The Department of Planning is the deemed independent body tasked with the decision making on the Tunnel proposals.
3. In following up local member Ms Wilson (North Sydney), her office advised the parents' concerns had been sent to the Department of Planning 'office' email. Ms Wilson is now on maternity leave and not able to further assist in progressing concerns.
4. Ms Wilson directed us to the officer in the Department of Planning in charge of dealing with the Tunnel proposals, and to direct further comment to him. In the absence of any issue I propose doing that by email and phone outlining the concerns and noting where parts of the EIS and reports conclusions are not based on correct facts.
5. There are reports from the State's Chief Scientist and Chief Medical Officer with the EIS. Both reports draw conclusions which are qualified in both cases and in the Chief Scientist's report have errors and omissions which impact on the conclusions drawn. The qualifications relate in part to assumptions certain standards etc from other parties are in place, for example that motor vehicles have Euro 6 pollution standards, this is a Federal issue and there is nothing mandated for that to occur. With the Chief Scientist, for example he says he does not know if the new Hong Kong Tunnel's stacks are filtered, a check would have told him they are in fact filtered, the Stockholm Tunnel he relies on as unfiltered has a maximum safe distance of 5 km between stacks whereas here they will be 7.5km etc.
6. The Government, in particular the Premier and Ms Wilson's offices cherry pick parts of these reports to say what is proposed is 'state of the art' and there is 'little to no health benefit for surrounding communities in installing filtration and air treatment in tunnels'. They are drawing the conclusion on the basis there is no qualification or error where there has been both.
7. The P & C needs to point out these factors to the Premier, I would propose we endeavour to meet with her (Ms Wilson is not available) and strongly through a team attending (the Presidents, myself and others) tell her the short comings and the need to reconsider critical aspects, the filtration, the traffic congestion, the public transport component and the construction impacts.
8. Is there interest communicating with other local schools to organise a debate or mock trial where the proposals are discussed by our community's young folk who will be left with the long term impact of this Government's actions. The Government can be invited to have their say. In my younger years I ran mock trial debates for local schools when I was with Apex so I have some background. Clearly it would be run independently of the School but it would give our children a voice in this important decision making by the Government.