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The Senate Enquiry

The proliferation of toll roads throughout Sydney and Australia is adding to inequality across the nation. Toll roads exist almost exclusively in the private for profit domain. Those that can least afford to pay tolls and suffer the least public transport facilities live in outlying areas away from the city centre. In all cases to facilitate the building of toll roads large amounts of public money is spent in channelling traffic towards and away from these private roads with these costs never being recouped in the sale price of the road. Therefore the public pay the bulk of the cost to build the toll roads and the tolls which enable the roads to be sold. All commercial entities using the toll roads have the ability to recoup these costs in the price of their goods and services and or in the tax returns as a cost to business whereas the private citizen enjoys none of this largesse.

Toll roads invariably involve the building of tunnels which gives the greatest opportunity to reduce pollution in our cities by filtering the exhaust outflow. That none of the toll road builders choose to incorporate filtering is purely down to running costs and leaves the wider community exposed to concentrated carcinogenic particles. The costs involved in incorporating and the maintenance of these filters is very small when taken into consideration of the health costs to the nation. A few cents per kilometre would be a small price to pay for the health benefits and longevity of our citizens.

Public transport in Australia since the Sydney trams were removed has run a very poor second to the private car and the evidence is there for all to see the further one travels from any population centre. That Australia's population is ageing and our health costs growing should in fact stimulate our governments in providing active integrated well planned public transport as this is where the needs and wants of the population lies. To encourage independence, fitness and wellbeing to those of us that almost certainly will get to the point where driving is no longer an option, public transport will be our only option. Spending vast amounts of public money on toll roads systems at the cost of public transport is a blight on Australia will reduce the liveability of our cities with every kilometre built.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my submission

Paul Jeffery

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