Dear EPA and Minister Speakman,

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments on the Clean Air for NSW Consultation Paper.

Across Sydney, ambient concentrations of PM 2.5 & 10 are increasing. This should compel the NSW Government to act to improve air quality and take all available measures to reduce particulate emissions.

We need to rethink building more motorways and road capacity in cities. Public Transport is more efficient and sustainable in moving people and freight.

Vehicle exhaust is a major contributor to Sydney’s pollution and loss of air utility. Pollutants from diesel exhaust are a toxic cocktail of particles and gases that cause lung cancer, bladder cancer, heart disease, heart attacks, strokes, asthma attacks, and lung damage in children. The health risks are real - and serious. The experts from the International Agency for Research in Cancer of the World Health Organisation has therefore classified "diesel exhaust" as a Group 1A carcinogen. This is the same group of cancer causing agents as arsenic, mustard gas and asbestos.

The particles that diesel engines release from their exhausts are very fine – so fine that they are inhaled deep into lungs where they remain permanently, just like asbestos fibres. The health effects above are caused by the inflammation of lung tissue, and blood clotting from particles entering your blood circulation.

Innovative cities are tackling air pollution by introducing 1) car free days 2) reducing road capacity 3) investing in public transport and 4) moving freight by rail. Except Sydney.

In Sydney, we are addressing congestion by building more tollroads - WestConnex and NorthConnex. These projects also involve a myriad of local road widenings in suburbs fundamentally incapable of absorbing more traffic. Motorways induce traffic, thus increasing road capacity will directly increase vehicle kilometres travelled (vkt). As a result pollution worsens.

Transport projects outcomes should include delivery of infrastructure in a safe & healthy way. Communities are concerned about the WestConnex and NorthConnex longitudinal ventilation systems. This is where fresh air enters with traffic, and then travels the length of the tunnel with the "piston"effect of traffic supported by fans. The air within the tunnel becomes progressively more contaminated until it is discharged via unfiltered exhaust stacks. Longitudinal ventilation may be suitable for shorter tunnels, but is both inadequate and inappropriate for these tunnels at 9km length.

With air pollution killing more people than car crashes, the cost of getting it wrong is important. The NSW Government needs to prevent any additional sources of particulate pollution, and to apply the strictest pollution standards. Particle pollution along the WestConnex and Northconnex routes are at or above current standards, and well above proposed standards by the NSW EPA.
Thank you

Kind regards,
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