

Filter our toxic road tunnels

Road tunnels are fast becoming a Sydney way of motoring. In theory, they lead to free flowing underground traffic and less congested roads, but they don't solve our public transport or our motor vehicle pollution problems. Their pollution is as harmful as passive smoking, leading to asthma in the short term and lung cancer, chronic heart disease and emphysema over time.

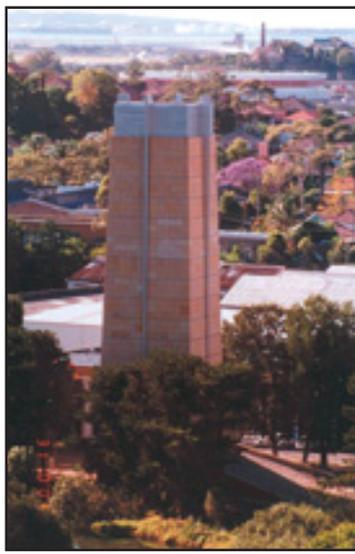
Unfiltered ventilation stacks have been built for the M5 East and Eastern Distributor, and are planned for the Cross-City, Lane Cove, Drummoyne, and Spit Bridge/Manly tunnels, in spite of vigorous opposition from community and environmental groups to the flawed planning processes and regulations which have allowed them to be built.

International tunnel experts (selected by the RTA) have described ventilation systems in tunnels such as the M5 East as being "uniquely complicated" and "prohibitively expensive" in terms of electricity and greenhouse gas production,



Traffic in toxic M5 tunnel

There separate Parliamentary enquiries have demonstrated their serious health and environmental dangers, both for motorists and residents. Time and again, realistic, proven, cost effective solutions have been recommended, but the NSW Government has refused to listen.



Exhaust stack

RTA claims that filtration systems are too expensive, not needed or ineffective have been shown to be untrue. Unfiltered tunnels are outmoded, with Japan for example using filtration for over 30 years in 30 tunnels. If we are to have tunnels, then we must make sure their fumes are filtered, to protect the health of motorists and people who live and work around their outlets.

Community groups affected by toxic tunnels are joining SOS by standing candidates in March on a FILTER OUR TUNNELS platform. If you drive or live in a seat affected by a road tunnel, use your vote to tell the Carr Government that we won't let ourselves and our children be poisoned by tunnel fumes when there are proven solutions to stop it.

St Leonards slums

The Lower North Shore community is outraged at what is described as another ill-conceived pro-development planning decision by the NSW Government. Lane Cove Council will be the consent authority for the development, planned for Duntroon Avenue, St Leonards.

"We are outraged by what Andrew Refshauge and the PlanningNSW urban consolidation junkies are foisting upon us and the rest of Sydney – more and more high rise," says Chris Michailidis, President of the St Leonards/North Wollstonecraft Community Association.

"We want sustainable development for Duntroon Avenue. But Refshauge has rezoned the site to allow between 240 and 260 units where there are currently sixteen 1920s single dwellings."

Mr Michailidis claimed that the Planning Minister has totally ignored the 1920s urban context and the traffic impact of the proposed development.

"If Refshauge or any of his PlanningNSW boffins ever came to the St Leonards area they will see that traffic barely moves now in peak hour. Let alone when they add another 500 vehicles."

Pain, but no gain

Patrick Troy, in *The Perils of Urban Consolidation* (Federation Press, 1996), concludes that there is nothing to be gained by overcrowding under present consolidation practices.

The total area required for urban development is largely a function of the size of the population, Troy says. "Those who wish to restrict the area of Australia covered by urban development of its largest cities should address their arguments to population policy rather than housing and urban development policy".

New voting system

In the March State Election, changes to the Upper House voting system will have a profound effect.

Prior to the changes, an above-the-line vote for a particular party was recorded as a vote extending to preferences chosen by that party and lodged with the returning officer. This no longer happens. Preference distribution is entirely optional and in the hands of the voter. The returning officer will only count actual preference votes recorded on the ballot paper by the voter.

For an above-the-line vote to be valid, the voter must number at least one box. However, voters may choose to direct preferences by numbering more than one box. SOS asks voters to consider numbering at least 4 above-the-line boxes.

For a below-the-line vote to be valid, the voter must number at least 15 boxes.

Lindfield rally draws 2,500

Residents and community groups turned out in force on Sunday, 17 November 2002 in a public rally to protest against State Government plans to mandate high-rise residential development throughout the Garden Municipality of Ku-ring-gai. An estimated 2,500 people – including representatives of groups fighting medium density development in key suburban flashpoints throughout Sydney – attended the rally in Lindfield.



photo: Walter Stanish

Rally organiser Sandy Bathgate said the strong turnout sent a message to Planning Minister Dr Andrew Refshauge that grassroots opposition to inappropriate medium-density and high-rise development in suburban areas was growing Sydney-wide. "Ku-ring-gai residents understand and accept the need to cater for increased population through residential development," he said. "But this must be done in an intelligent way. Instead, this Government is ramming through a one-size-fits-all strategy, devised largely by developers. Like many areas in Sydney, Ku-ring-gai has special attributes that are enjoyed by all of Sydney, and these must be catered for in local planning".

Mr Bathgate said that new development should protect both buildings with heritage significance and Ku-ring-gai's unique natural environment, including its unbroken tree canopy linking national parks. "It beggars belief that the Australian Council of National Trusts can designate one third of Ku-ring-gai an Endangered Place only for the State Government to insist on ripping into sensitive sites to install high-rise flats," he said.

The rally heard 17 year old local Jess Allen read messages from well-wishers, including Green Ban activist, Jack Munday, and rock singer and greens campaigner Peter Garrett, who said: "As a former resident of Ku-ring-gai I can vouch for its strong natural and heritage qualities. This is imposing inappropriate high development where the developers' dreams become the residents' nightmare".

"This move must be resisted, your voices must be clearly heard, and Ku-ring-gai as you know it and love it must be preserved".



Jess Allen reading messages from prominent activists (photo: Walter Stanish)

The rally was triggered by plans released by Dr Refshauge in October 2002 to rezone six local conglomerate sites, including several heritage buildings. The plans allow for multi-storey developments of up to seven storeys at each of the six sites along the elevated North Shore ridgeline. The proposals would breach the area's unbroken tree canopy, which Ku-ring-gai Council policy has sought to preserve for more than two decades. The rezoning follows Dr Refshauge's stripping of planning power from Ku-ring-gai Council last January.

Albion Park pain

Residents of Albion Park are concerned about a multi-lot housing estate development in Tullimbah, which, they say, will increase traffic on their already overloaded road network.

Local resident Shirley Hollis said that the Tullimbah Action Group had been formed to protest against the scale of the development, which she says is totally inappropriate for a semi-rural area like Tullimbah.

"There are no job prospects in this area and the proposed dormitory suburb has no facilities, so that all of the residents will have to drive to work, to shop and to access schools, and health and sporting facilities – we're facing gridlock".

Ashfield open space deprived

Ashfield Councillor Monica Wangmann says family homes are becoming a threatened species.

"Ashfield's North Ward has less than 30 % of dwellings as single houses with gardens. The third most densely populated Local Government Area in NSW, Ashfield has the lowest ratio of open space per person."

Put 'em under

Energy Australia mutilates street trees and gets a massive hidden subsidy says SOS. When overhead power lines are brought down in storms the work of the police and the SES is paid for through local rates and taxes. SOS says that a long-term plan for the undergrounding of cables is necessary.

Yes, I'd like to help the **SAVE OUR SUBURBS** campaign

Name

Address

Post code

Donation \$..... (taxable deduction up to \$100)

Method of payment (circle):

Cheque; Money Order; or

Charge my: Visa, Master, Bank Card

with the amount stated, Card Account Number: _____

Expiry Date ... / ...

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Please mail to

"SAVE OUR SUBURBS"
PO Box 492 WAHROONGA 2076