

My name is Pauline Galvin and I am before you today representing the community group, Moreland Community for Action on Transport (MCAT). This is a group whose roots can be traced to the successful “Save the Upfield Line” community campaign in the 1980’s and early 90’s and the Stop the EastWest Tunnel campaign a few short years ago.

MCAT Submission - West Gate Tunnel

Unfortunately, the **Environment Effects Act 1978** does not require that an Environment Effects Statement (EES) for a particular project also include any consideration of alternative projects which could achieve the objective as the proposed project. This is in contrast to the United States federal legislation on Environment Impact Statements (the EES equivalent in the USA) which requires alternative projects to be assessed.

Thus the EES for the West Gate Tunnel produced by the Western Distributor Authority, does not, and is not required to, consider alternatives to the proposal which might also achieve one or all of the objectives of the West Gate Tunnel proposal. The problems (summarised) described in the EES, are:

- Inadequate transport capacity on the M1 corridor;
- over-reliance on the West Gate Bridge;
- inadequate port and freight connections to cater for growth;
- reduced amenity in the inner west;
- mismatch between land use and transport.

Implicit in the West Gate Tunnel proposal is the assumption that ever increasing road capacity can eliminate or reduce traffic congestion. However the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission (VCEC) inquiry into traffic congestion (2015) provided evidence that congestion returns to previous levels within three to five years following works to increase road capacity. This is known as induced traffic, and with freeway and major road construction, results from spatial convergence (drivers who previously used alternative routes switch back to the expanded road), time convergence ((drivers who previously avoided peak travel switch back to travelling in peak periods) and modal convergence (drivers who previously used alternative transport return to cars) (quoted in VCEC’s Assessing Options for Traffic Congestion, p.275).

Capacity in the context of the EES refers to the number of cars, trucks and other vehicles on the road. However, the M1 and other freeways and roads in and around Melbourne are not operating at capacity because of the number of vacant seats in private cars, which in peak hours are generally at about 50% capacity. The purpose of a transport system is to move people and freight, not cars and trucks. Removing 50% of private cars from the freeways would provide more than sufficient capacity for trucks to operate.

Alternative proposals that have not been considered in the EES included:

- the proposal that the State Government took to the last election, the West Gate Distributor;

For example, the West Gate Distributor (subject to EES requirements) could provide a low-impact alternative route to allow removal of trucks from inner west suburban, notwithstanding that it, and any other road project, will not reduce traffic congestion. However its effect on amenity in the inner west will be much less than the West Gate Tunnel.

- a rail freight line from the Port of Melbourne (for which funds are available);

The construction of the freight line from the Port of Melbourne has the potential (with appropriate regulation and perhaps financial incentives) to remove significant amount of freight transport from roads.

- public transport options. While the Metro Tunnel 1 project will address some capacity issues in the south-east and north-west corridors of Melbourne, there is scope for a number of other public transport initiatives, some of which are already contained in Public Transport Victoria's 'Network Development Plan'.

Appropriately designed and operated public transport has great potential to remove cars from roads. In the west there is an immediate requirement for increased frequencies of train services on the Werribee, Altona and Sunbury lines, and for improved bus services which service both rail stations and provide direct links from the western suburbs to the city from locations distant from train stations.

A large modern city like Melbourne is a complex inter-connected entity. The West Gate Tunnel will have many negative impacts on the liveability of Melbourne. It is not possible to isolate the effect of a project like the Westgate Tunnel Project to one part of the city, there will be ramifications throughout Greater Melbourne.

The Westgate Tunnel will create a wasteland (by the construction of the spaghetti junction of freeways and connections) at E-Gate, in the increase in traffic in Melbourne's Central Business District, the north-west precincts on Melbourne, including North Melbourne, West Melbourne, Kensington, Newmarket, Flemington and Ascot Vale, and Brunswick, where the writers of this submission reside.

Some of the increase in traffic in secondary roads will result from drivers avoiding the tolls which will be charged. In Brunswick there will be increased traffic around the entrances to the City Link, Park Street, Brunswick Road, Grantham Street, Melville Road, and possibly other roads further north such as Moreland Road and Bell Street. This is confirmed by Moreland City Council submission. Further the Moreland City Council says about this project:

“Council argues that the project design does not achieve all of these outcomes, and further that the Vision, Objectives, Principles and Statements of Policy Principles in the Transport Integration Act are not being achieved”. They also write that this project “lacks any form of strategic transport focus”, that “it contradicts at least one of the objectives of the Transport Integration Act namely ‘integration of transport and land use’ and in particular the sub clause relating to reducing the need for private motor vehicle transport and the extent of travel (TIA 2010 11(2) (c)). The Council questions the traffic modeling and referring to induced traffic volumes concludes “the likely outcome is that significant east west arterial roads, such as Bell Street, Brunswick Road and Moreland Road, along with their adjacent local road network, will witness significantly increased traffic volumes, particularly in peak times”. Regarding freight council believes “This is an important option for the economic and environment well being of the entire state and should be pursued in concert with a range of sustainable transport initiatives and investments prior to embarking on an additional motorway.”

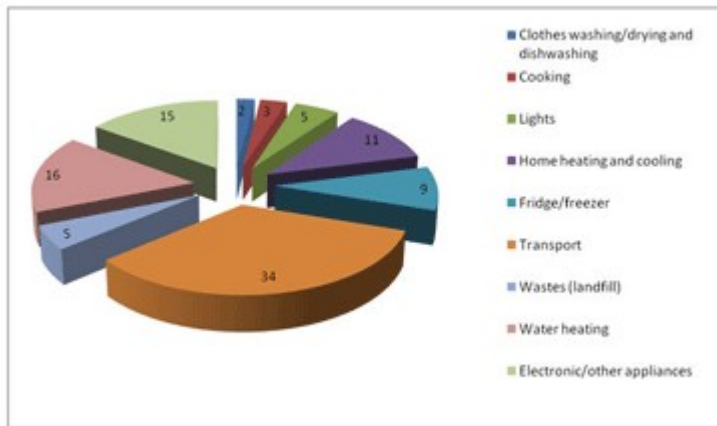
The increase in road traffic resulting from this project will negatively affect the health and well being of all Melbourne's residents, workers and visitors, both on completion of the project and also well into the future. In particular people living and working in areas proximate to the project will suffer the detrimental effects of increased traffic noise (and resulting vibrations), increased air pollution consisting of particles (including very small particles <2.5 micron diameter) and poisonous and noxious gases from vehicle exhausts, more urban heat, and visual pollution. And there also is the contribution that this project will make to increase global warming and subsequent climate change.

In 2017 there is little doubt that humans have had and will continue to have an effect on the chemical conditions of the biosphere that are necessary for the maintenance of a climate conducive to human thriving. Over the last few decades humanity is being forced to confront the consequences of unfettered growth and carbon intensive ways of doing things.

Australians already have a ‘carbon footprint’ that is larger per person than the rest of the world bar the USA and the oil producing Gulf States, and is routinely in the top 15 countries for highest total emissions. In signing the Paris climate agreement 2015, Australia has recognised that we have to reduce the carbon emissions we generate from a range of activities including transport if we are to keep global warming below 2°C. For example in July 2015, the Climate Change Authority said if the Australian Government was to do its fair share to keep the 2°C commitment, it would need to reduce emissions by 40 to 60 per cent by 2030, based on the level of emissions from the year 2000. (<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-08-14/emission-reduction-targets-not-enough-climate-change-authority/6699034>) In signing and ratifying this global agreement, we recognise we have global responsibilities to reduce our carbon emissions.

Australian households generate at least one-fifth of Australia's greenhouse gases – more than 18 tonnes per household each year. Averages provide only part of the picture because households can vary greatly in the amount of greenhouse gas emissions. Depending on where you live and your lifestyle, annual greenhouse gas emissions can vary from as low as 3 tonnes up to 30 tonnes or more.

An average Australian family's greenhouse gas emissions



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www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au/files/217567/File/Globwarm_Cool_It.pdf

http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/agc/r_emissions.html#!

Whilst there is much that households can do to reduce their carbon emissions, we are constrained by the systems and infrastructure that make up our cities. Where these systems and infrastructure use and encourages high carbon options we as residents in the city are locked into these high carbon options. Worse, choosing to invest in infrastructure that encourages high carbon emissions locks future residents and future generations into a high carbon lifestyle, which is in contravention of section 17 of the Transport Integration Act 2010, b) which calls for equity between generations by not compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. In order to reduce the average Melbournians' carbon footprint we need to have city wide systems in place that will make low carbon options possible. Otherwise we rob future generations of the chance to live well and responsibly in a carbon constrained future. In this case, we need infrastructure that encourages public transport use rather than private car usage and freight on rail to the port, rather than freight on roads to the port. To do otherwise is to address rising traffic issues with a project that simply fuels the paradigm of high car reliance.

Providing alternatives to high carbon transport modes is the only way that this city will be able to reduce the carbon footprint of the transport system. Indeed the Paris climate agreement, is

in complete congruence with the vision statement of the Victorian transport Integration Act 2010,

The Parliament recognises the aspirations of Victorians for an integrated and sustainable transport system that contributes to an inclusive, prosperous and environmentally responsible State.

Projects such as the West Gate Tunnel, by adopting a “business as usual” approach to infrastructure development are in contravention of both the Paris climate agreement and the Transport Integration Act 2010. There are many aspects of the Transport Integration Act that are contravened by the “business as usual” approach that has led to the Westgate Tunnel Proposal, these include:

- section 8 social and economic inclusion a) minimising barriers to access so that so far as is possible the transport system is available to as many persons who wish to use it;
- 8 b) providing tailored infrastructure, services and support for persons who find it difficult to use the transport system.
- section 10 The transport system should actively contribute to environmental sustainability by—
- 10, a) protecting, conserving and improving the natural environment
- 10, b) avoiding, minimising and offsetting harm to the local and global environment, including through transport-related emissions and pollutants,
- 10, c) promoting forms of transport and the use of forms of energy and transport technologies which have the least impact on the natural environment;
- 10 d) improving the environmental performance of all forms of transport and the forms of energy used in transport-related
- 10 e) preparing for and adapting to the challenges presented by climate change.
- Section 11, 2 c) reducing the need for private motor vehicle transport
- Section 11, 4) transport systems should improve the amenity of communities
- Section 13, 1, The transport system should be safe and support health and wellbeing.
- Section 16 The principle of triple bottom-line assessment means an assessment of all the economic, social and environmental costs and benefits taking into account externalities and value for money.

- And Section 17 the principle of equity as mentioned above

[http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/domino/web_notes/ldms/pubstatbook.nsf/f932b66241ecf1b7ca256e92000e23be/800014F6404488AACA2576DA000E3354/\\$FILE/10-006a.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/domino/web_notes/ldms/pubstatbook.nsf/f932b66241ecf1b7ca256e92000e23be/800014F6404488AACA2576DA000E3354/$FILE/10-006a.pdf)

More money spent on mega roads will mean less funds available for alternatives that might address congestion and actually get some of the trucks off the roads.

This city belongs to all of us, and we owe it to future Melbourne to plan for and build the sustainable options that will make this city 1) more liveable for its actual residents and 2) a globally environmentally responsible entity. We must start doing this now.

Knowing what we know about The Anthropocene and global warming, our carbon footprint and our international commitments to address our carbon emissions, we cannot afford to put our efforts into a project that will be at best 'not worse than doing nothing'. In this time of critical global impacts, we must actively plan to reduce our carbon footprint. This project, due to induced traffic and encouragement of high carbon options will not move us toward the sustainable transport system envisioned in our Legislation. It should not be encouraged or built.

Moreland Community for Action on Transport (MCAT)

Written by Pauline Galvin and Denis Watson.

Contact details:

Pauline Galvin, phone 0421 828 742, email pmgalvin@oportetvivre.com

Denis Watson, phone 9380 8628, email denisgwatson@gmail.com.