NORTH EAST LINK ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS STATEMENT.

Independent Assessment Committee Panel Hearing.

12th September 2019.

Cynthia Pilli

It has been claimed that the high volume of traffic on Bulleen Road, Rosanna Road and others in the North East corridor, can only be relieved by building the most expensive mega road ($15 billion) in the country.

Yet, it is hardly a surprise, that without effective public transport alternatives, there is no capacity for any of us to move around without using our cars. In fact, build more roads and congestion grows. Build reliable public transport, as recent train travel figures indicate, and passengers will take it up.

I live in East Doncaster, a short walk to Blackburn Road. I'm well serviced by the 906 to the city. However, in peak periods, despite being the age I am, rarely get to sit down and full buses have passed me and others by. The Committee will no doubt be aware that it is not uncommon for other smart bus services to be "full" at peak periods.

By 2031, Doncaster Hill is expected to accommodate over 10,000 residents and 5,400 apartments, along with 15 million visitors annually to Westfield Doncaster - all of which will generate significant traffic congestion without mode shift to public transport. So why the North East Link?

The committee will no doubt also be aware, that the revamped Eastern Freeway will have a dedicated Busway. While a slight improvement on what exists, there is still only a road. At Hoddle St and Victoria St, still only a road to accommodate more buses and more vehicles.

The 901 bus service, between the Airport and Frankston travels through the North East corridor and East Doncaster. As long as I plan for a 2hrs plus journey, I can use it to access the airport, but few do, sighted the length of the journey. For many it is a rubbish service and never have I seen employees at the airport using the service. Airport rail is desperately needed - not a mega toll road.

Doncaster Rail (from Doncaster Hill to Victoria Park) has a capacity to take 800 cars every trip off the freeway. Stations along the freeway, together with local buses is what happens overseas. Why not here?

Moving ahead with Metro 2 high capacity rail service linking western suburbs, a sustainable East West transport crossing, increased capacity on the Mernda and Hurstbridge rail corridors has been recommended to take the city towards a sustainable future.

That the Andrews government has shown no appetite for logical answers, clinging instead to the folly of the North East Link, will the committee use its mandate to not ignore the traffic engineers and scientific experts and call out this agenda that will take the State backwards and into a great big expensive traffic jam and landscape forever changed?

I respectfully ask the Committee to follow its collective conscience when formulating advice to the Ministers and the Andrews Government and thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Pilli