

Coming to a street near you ..

Council's "Tunnel Vision"

- .. Toll nightmare
- .. Poisonous pollution
- .. More traffic jams
- .. The "Airport Road" is back



Communities Against the Tunnels
(CATT) www.rag.org.au/tunnel/

Media Release

Sunday 21 March 2005

Rally Resolves to Keep Pressure On

Approximately 300 people from the north and south sides of Brisbane rallied at Windsor Park yesterday against the North South Bypass Tunnel, the first of four unfiltered Tunnels known collectively as TransApex, proposed by the Brisbane City Council to crisscross the city.

After listening to four speakers, a southside resident, a northside resident and two interstate experts, a resolution was carried by the crowd to keep the pressure on the Local and State Government's to abandon the TransApex tunnel vision. Speakers urged both levels of Government to instead look for alternatives that do not have such disastrous effects on people's health and community living, such as more frequent and more reliable public transport.

Giselle Mawer from Sydney moved to get away from one tunnel only to be in the path of another warned Brisbane residents to learn from the mistakes made interstate.

"In Sydney we are more and more circled by toxic tunnels. Each one is supposed to be the much heralded missing link and as each one is built the next one becomes the missing link and all that's missing for us is the common sense link which doesn't seem to exist in the planning department," she said.

Ms Mawer said tunnels were always sold as ways to relieve traffic congestion when in reality they tripled capacity as was the case with the M5 in Sydney in the first week it opened. She also warned about continually increasing tolls – "It can cost you \$20 in Sydney at the moment to cross halfway across the city."

She said the health costs were by far the biggest concern with the Government using standards that are at least 15 years old. "I am really, really disheartened to know that you've got the same consultants, the same processes happening here (in Brisbane).

"It really does stuff up your life...headaches, sore eyes, bad for asthmatics, the elderly, the young, those with pre-existing conditions," Ms Mawer said.

Long time activist and northside resident Anne Boccabella spoke of her experiences fighting over past freeway and road projects opposed by the community.

Ms Bocabella said Council was gambling to build these tunnels with billions of taxpayers money when there is no guarantee they will even be used or make a difference to traffic congestion.

“The first one will increase the public debt of Brisbane City Council by 50% and that leads from nowhere to nowhere unless the second one is built and then the third one is built,” she said.

New father, southside resident George Vasilakis, told the crowd how he and his wife Fiona bought a beautiful old Queenslander in Woollongabba which they painstakingly renovated over the past four years intent on bringing up children in the suburb. Their daughter Mia is just four weeks old and their dreams are shattered by the prospect of a tunnel exit at the end of their street bringing traffic congestion to their door and an exhaust stack nearby set to spray poisonous pollution all over their young family. George also spoke of how difficult it has been to get Council to listen to the concerns of residents despite his being a member of the Brisbane City Council’s Community Reference Group.

Dr Paul Mees from Melbourne University shared his valuable insights regarding more public transport being a better solution to traffic congestion instead of building more monuments to the car.

“Maybe it’s time Brisbane tried to copy the best transport regimes in the world rather than the transport planning of the 1950s. Maybe, if we’ve got \$6 billion to spend instead of saying how many roads can we build for that maybe we should say, what’s the most effective way of spending that money.”

Dr Mees teaches at the University of Melbourne in the areas of transport, strategic urban planning and planning law. He is the author of numerous book chapters, journal articles and conference papers, and a book titled *A Very Public Solution: Transport in the Dispersed City*.

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