

What kind of future do you want? “Tunnel Vision” or a Smart Transport Solution?



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

“Tunnel Vision” is no solution

The North South Bypass Tunnel (NSBT) is just the first link in Brisbane Lord Mayor, Campbell Newman's, plan to build five bridge and tunnel crossings of the Brisbane River.

The “TransApex” plan will cost at least \$5.2 billion, and has a high probability of a cost blow out (Courier Mail, 18 March 2005 p.4). The tunnels are meant to ease traffic gridlock (AAP Newswire, 28 Feb 2005).

The tunnel will increase congestion

The council's own study – the NSBT draft Environmental Impact Statement (2005) - reports the following increases in traffic because of the tunnel:

Lutwyche Rd traffic increases by 13%; Shafston Ave traffic increases by 26%; Wellington Rd traffic increases by 32%; Ipswich Rd traffic increases by 25%; O'Keefe St traffic increases by 31%; South East Freeway traffic increases by 8% (NSBT draft EIS Traffic Appendix, Table 10.2).

It is reasonable to assume these traffic increases will add significant delays on roads that are already busy. But Council is not committing to any new public transport, walking, cycling or road projects to ease the congestion.

Do you want more traffic in your street?

No major city in the world has ever built its way out of congestion with more roads or tunnels.

The more roads we build, the more we all drive. It's like loosening your belt to fight obesity. It's a vicious cycle. Traffic grows to fill new roads almost as soon as they're built.

When the M5 East tunnel extension was built in Sydney, daily traffic increased from 55,000 vehicles per day in 2001 to 83,000 vehicles per day in 2003. At the same time, train lines parallel to the road lost 385,000 passengers in one year (Catford, R. 2003, *Transport as a determinant of health: What role for the health sector?*)

When London's M25 ring road was finished, congestion on every section dramatically increased. They've now changed the way they evaluate projects as a result (Standing Advisory Committee for Trunk Road Assessment 1999, *Transport and the economy: Full report*).

Why should Brisbane spend at least \$5.2 billion just to make traffic congestion worse? More air and noise pollution, health problems, vibration, loss of business and property devaluation are just some of the other legacies of big road and tunnel projects.

And remember, 35% of the population doesn't have a car and won't benefit from the tunnel at all.

Brisbane needs a Smart Transport Solution

Communities Against the Tunnels (CATT) is a proactive coalition of transport professionals, academics, residents – all rising up to say enough. Unlike Council, CATT doesn't have \$20M to throw at this problem. But a Smart State should be able to put together a Smart Transport Solution.

CATT believes Brisbane deserves a 21st Century solution - not 1960s thinking based on an old outdated plan. Here's a few ideas that could help to fix Brisbane's transport problems and get a more livable city

Better Public Transport

Busways, light rail systems, more frequent services, cheaper services, late night services all cost less than tunnels and can carry many more people.

Portland (Oregon's) light rail system removed the need for eight 42-storey car parks in the CBD and two additional lanes on every freeway into the city. Just one new light rail line generated \$1.3 billion in commercial, retail and residential development – more than 6 times the cost of the light rail (Victoria Transport Policy Institute 2005, *TDM Encyclopedia*, www.vtppi.org).

Melbourne's train and tram service keeps 190 million car journeys off city streets every year (Metropolitan Transport Forum, *Creating Choices – The Transport Web*, www.mtf.org.au).

Per kilometre, a 6 lane freeway costs double that of a double track railway and uses 4 times more space per kilometre. The railway moves 20,000 people per hour in each direction while the freeway moves a quarter of this volume (Metropolitan Transport Forum, *Creating Choices – The Transport Web*, www.mtf.org.au).

Brisbane's own busway can carry more people per hour than the 6-8 lane South East Freeway. Also, Integrated ticketing and improved TransLink bus, train and ferry services have resulted in up to 50% more people catching public transport in the last year alone.

More bikeways, more walking, better urban design, quality public spaces

Completing the bikeway network for Brisbane will cost a fraction of the tunnels but can add as much capacity to Brisbane's road network as the tunnels will. Most bike and walking trips are one less car trip.

Tunnels will take up valuable inner city space that can be used for housing, business, green space and new urban villages. Milwaukee, San Francisco, Toronto and Portland have demolished freeways without negatively impacting on mobility. Plus they used the space for new housing, businesses, and parks in exciting urban redevelopments (Victoria Transport Policy Institute 2005, *TDM Encyclopedia*, www.vtppi.org).

Residents in mixed use areas of Seattle (ie where housing, shops, jobs and entertainment are in the one area) travel 28% less than those in adjacent areas, and 120% less than residents in the suburbs (McCormack et al).

Drive a bit less – Travel Smart

Sure we need to drive cars, but it's about having the choice to take a bus or train, ride a bike, walk or get home deliveries instead sometimes that's important. Leaving the car at home even one day a week can make a big difference to the need for new roads like this tunnel. Can you think of just one car trip (shops, school, visiting, work) that you could do another way each week?

Perth's Travelsmart program is targeting almost 160,000 residents across Perth city every year. It is set to cut over 10 million car trips, boost public transport use by 1.5 million boardings and decrease traffic by 13%. The program saves money in avoiding new infrastructure! (www.dpi.wa.gov.au).

Queensland's successful Travelsmart program, with projects at the Grange, Townsville, and now Redland Shire, shows that it can work in Brisbane, and cost a lot less than the tunnels (www.transport.qld.gov.au).

It's your choice. Visit the CATT website www.rag.org.au/tunnel/ or phone 0416 478 615 to find out what you can do.