

## **Chris Dunlevy Westgate Tunnel Submission**

### **Opening statement**

As a resident of the West, I am the first to admit we need an alternative to the Westgate Bridge, however as a resident of Brooklyn, I have grave concerns with the Westgate Tunnel.

This new Project worries me deeply. I have been watching it with a keen eye over the last year or so, and now after reading the EES my initial optimism has been replaced with a sense of dread. I see a very flawed and contemptuous project for all who live in our area. A main objective of the EES is to remove trucks from local roads of the Inner West, however Millers Road is to cope an increase of 147%, that is 7,000 more trucks per day.

If this project goes ahead as planned, it will suck the life out of our vibrant community, and leave us stranded, unsafe and isolated. We will be wedged in by a Freeway carrying 37,000 more vehicles a day to the South, a very heavily congested Geelong Road full of toll dodgers and rat runners to the North, and now the completely crippled Millers road to the East.

Millers Road is Fundamental to Brooklyn's functionality and liveability. It is the main thoroughfare and connection of our suburb to the majority of our amenities. It is our lifeline, our heartbeat.

Roads minister Luke Donnellan is quoted as saying "We've listened to the community every step of the way on this project, delivering the 24/7 truck bans that the inner west has been calling for to make residential streets safer and quieter," It's interesting when you read about the 'toxic trucks', 'get them off our streets' etc, and the residents who live near/on Francis, Somerville and a few others in Footscray talk about the hard fought campaigns to get them off residential roads.

I wonder then what exactly constitutes a residential road? Is it the amount of lanes? Francis has 4, Millers has 4. Is it the amount of houses, schools, parks, residential facilities on it? Last I looked Millers is full of all of them. Is it the historical use of the road? Francis was one named Docklands highway and has been a truck route for as long as I can remember, Millers was a two lane road running alongside farm and grazing land.

I'm struggling to see why Millers is now being referred to as purpose built? Purpose built for what exactly? 14,800 trucks a day? Well the communities of Brooklyn, Altona North and Spotswood tend to disagree with the statement from Mr Donnellan, I wonder just how much consideration was given to us in this planning process, if any at all?

Upon reading the EES I notice a reoccurring theme, and that is statements to the affect of – 'designed to relieve traffic pressure' and 'remove trucks from residential areas'. I feel this does not represent in any shape or form the actual impact it will have on Brooklyn. In fact upon reading further it states a number of times that it will indeed have the exact opposite affect. As residents we feel we are getting a very raw deal.

### **Introduction**

My Grandfather built our house with his own two hands in Eames Avenue after he immigrated with his young family from Ireland following WW2. Along with my Grandmother, he raised my Father and his two siblings there, and now I am raising my

two Sons alongside my wife. They are 4<sup>th</sup> generation Brooklyn, and over the last 70 odd years there have been some enormous changes to this area.

I have heard stories from residents that when they built, on the right day, standing on the roof you could see sections of the ocean at Altona, as there was very little in between. Over the years Millers Road has been established as a part residential, part commercial or industrial street, and it has functioned as such.

There was once a Primary school, Altona Gate was a quarry and a Hostel stood on Millers Road between Geelong road and the Freeway that gave thousands of immigrants like my grandparents their start in their new country.

I like to think the majority of changes to Brooklyn have been positive, they have just opened the upgraded Brooklyn Reserve in Nolan AV, we have had a moonlight cinema and Christmas Carol night for the community, a dog park was erected, a laneways project commenced plus other small changes for the good of our community. We have lost some of our heart and soul with the milk bars disappearing and older residents moving on, but a new generation of families are doing their best to usher in a new age.

However Brooklyn is not without it's problems. The majority of the suburb apart from the area we live in is industrial. We are wedged between The Westgate Freeway and Geelong Road. On the North side of Geelong road, there are a number of factories that pollute the air including an abattoir, tanning factory and tip to name a few. At the junction of Millers and the Freeway stands the Brooklyn pumping station, and further West a number of other heavy polluters, that lead our Suburb to officially be Melbourne's most polluted, and 8<sup>th</sup> in Australia.

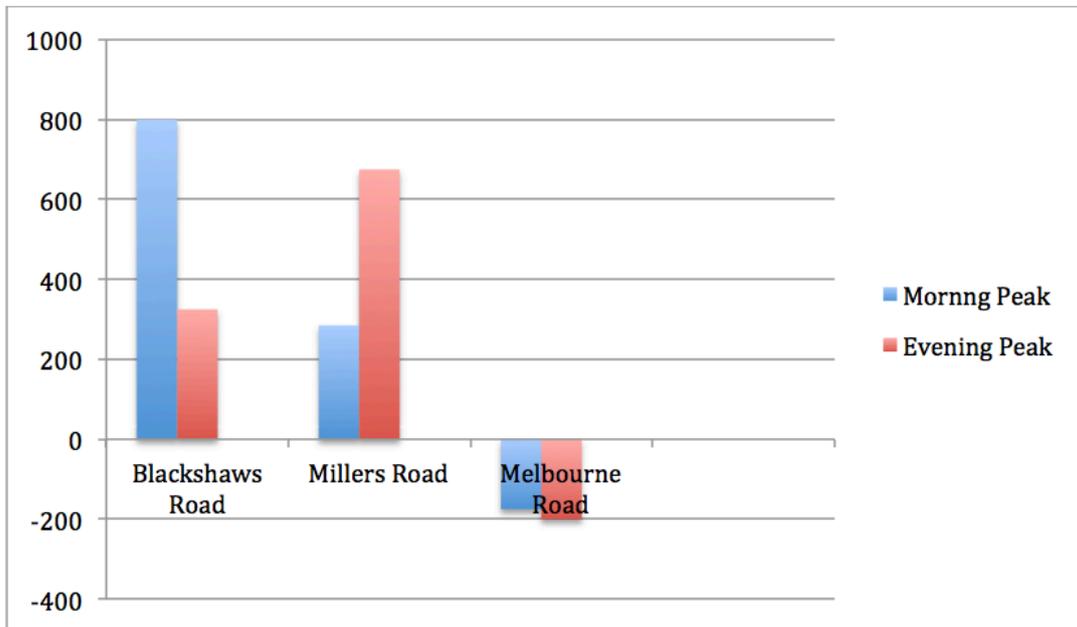
We are constantly bombarded with poor air quality. The EPA is contacted almost daily with complaints from the foul and disgusting smells coming from these factories, which lead them to set up a monitoring station, and issue fines for breaches. However, I believe over the recent years there has been significant progress, in reducing these issues and an air of optimism has begun to fill the air alongside the odor.

Still, Brooklyn consistently tops the list of polluted Melbourne suburbs. In 2014 there were 28 days over the limit of PM10 readings, the world health organization warns that you should be exposed to no more than 5 days a year. The EPA is constantly issuing fines, at times the dust and smell is completely unbearable and enough to make you sick. On average, for one entire Month a year the air is too dirty for human consumption. Turning South onto Millers Road from Eames Avenue and the majority of other streets is a very difficult process as it is. The introduction of 7,000 plus new trucks a day will make it impossible. I have viewed the plans and I see no upgrade to our section of Millers at all. The addition of 7,000 trucks will bring traffic, pollution, noise and vibrations, plus a plethora of safety issues.

As a tradesman my work varies, but the majority is in the inner West. If I am heading West down the Westgate Freeway, I will use Geelong Road, as turning right out of Eames, and then again onto the freeway is a nightmare. I can only imagine how bad it will get upon the completion of this project.

As trucks will no longer use Francis Street and others, the predictions are that the majority will transfer from the Brooklyn, Tottenham, and West Footscray truck yards down McDonalds Road, across Geelong Road and up Millers. Add to these two new huge housing estates, one in the former Bradmills area, the other on the Don small goods land, and I believe we are heading for a traffic crisis.

Once Precinct 15 is complete, HBCC modelling predicts the following:



To further compound the problem, we have no train lines in our area, so for many driving is the only real option, especially for tradesmen like myself who need to transport tools and equipment.

I do not believe the WGTP is money well spent, it is not listed as a project that should be given priority in any of the plans for Melbourne. The Transport Integration Act 2010 No. 6 of 2010 Part 2—Vision Statement states the following:

1. (a) maximising access to residences, employment, markets, services and recreation;
2. (b) planning and developing the transport system more effectively;
3. (c) reducing the need for private motor vehicle transport and the extent of travel;
4. (d) facilitating better access to, and greater mobility within, local communities.

Increasing our reliability on private motor vehicles is the opposite of what the Transport Integration Act suggests, this project will only further lock the residents of Brooklyn into having that less than desirable option. On those grounds alone, I feel this project is a dud and needs to go back to the drawing board.

But if the project is to go ahead why can't the trucks and heavy transport not be encouraged and directed onto either an upgraded Grieve Parade with links to the Ring Road and The Princess Freeway, plus a direct link to Somerville, and an updated Tottenham Parade onto a new flyover along Cemetery Road, across the back of the industrial estates along Cawley road or even above the rail line, to a new on /off ramp? There are no schools, houses, parks, childcare centres etc. in the immediate areas of either, only factories and warehouses.

With a budget of over \$5.5 Billion, I believe you have a responsibility to explore the option of creating an extension of Grieve Parade, that crosses Geelong Road, and either

upgrading and extending Jones road to link up with Somerville Road, or creating a new road to run alongside it.

It would also be necessary to place restrictions on trucks using Millers (unless they are transiting to the warehouses on Millers between the Freeway and Geelong road, or the local area) much like the restrictions placed on Francis Street.

Why have the numbers of vehicles entering and exiting from the new redevelopments of Precinct 15 and Precinct 17 not been included in the modeling from the WGTP?

My eldest Son starts school next year in Newport, My wife works there also. We do our grocery and other shopping at Altona Gate, and visit our family in Williamstown very often. We use this section of Millers Road every day without fail. We have had a number of close calls coming out of Eames whilst trying to turn right, and believe it is only a matter of time before a serious accident will occur, either with us or another vehicle.

In early June I was collected by an oversize truck going South on Millers as I tried to turn into Eames Avenue. Lucky there was only damage to our vehicles and not to anybody, but I could easily have had my two boys with me in the van and it could have been so much worse. I make that turn two times a day minimum.

As the Westgate freeway is congested during peak, we try to use other back streets to get to Williamstown and back to visit family, kinder and Auskick etc, upon the completion of this project that task will be impossible. You are not improving traffic for us, you are completely destroying our neighbourhoods.

A few numbers that I find disturbing in the EES are: Millers Road – An increase of 4,500 vehicles, and 7,000 trucks per day, yet - Francis Street – reduction in 4,000 to 5,000 vehicles and 3,000 to 4,750 trucks, & Somerville Rd- reduction in 1,250 to 1,750 trucks per day.

Removing trucks from Yarraville and Footscray, to dump them on Brooklyn and Altona North is not the answer. Why have we been held in such contempt? Why are you perfectly happy to cripple our neighbourhood at the expense of others?

On many occasions in the EES we keep getting back to statements to the tune of ‘ The potential increase of trucks on Millers Road and Williamstown Road could impact on the residential area by affecting North South and East-West connectivity, including travel times’

Which is the exact opposite of the opening statement spruiking the removal of trucks from residential streets in the inner West, and ‘The project would enable the Victorian Government to extend 24 – hour truck bans in the inner West, removing 9,300 trucks from residential streets.

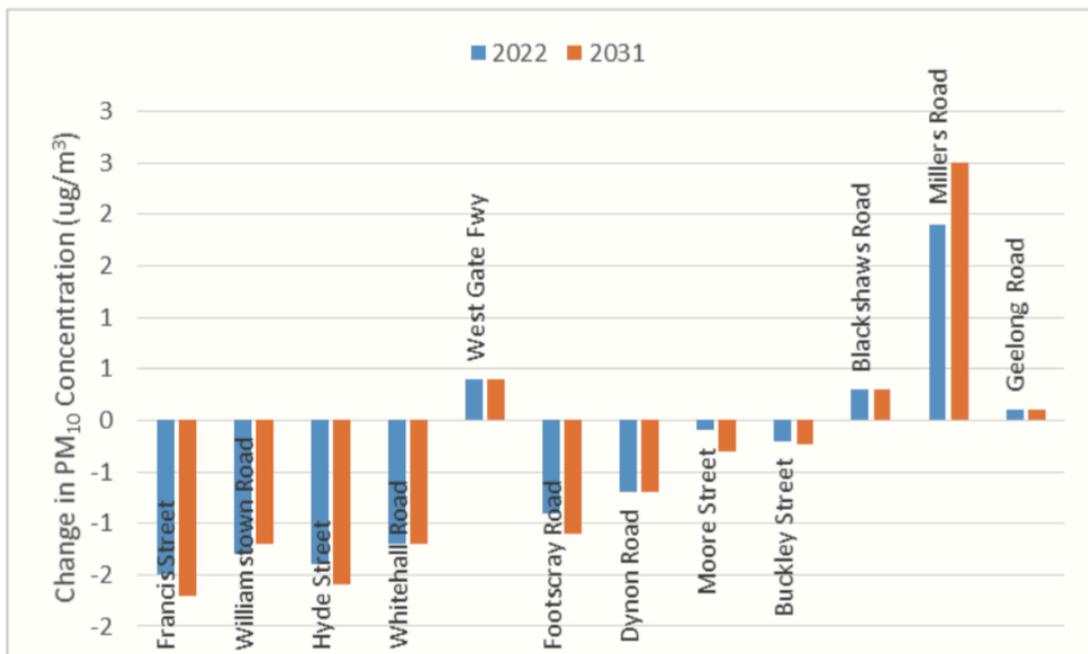
How does the transport industry feel that now they have to pay a toll on a freeway that we already pay for in our taxes? A large number of them operate on razor thin margins as it is, you will send them broke. There will be no way to get from the West to the city now without paying a toll, a luxury they have in the East and North.

PM10 and PM2.5 appear to be nothing more than numbers on a chart to these lawyers. I was left thinking how many of the people involved in the design of this project actually live in the affected areas? I would say very little to none. If someone’s children, parents, siblings or friends lived in Brooklyn or Altona North, what would their advice be? I would find it hard to believe they wouldn’t tell them to pack up and leave immediately

or face the very real danger of their kids developing cancer and dying due to the fact 37,000 extra vehicles will now be running mere metres passed their doors.

As a fellow member of our community said to me 'this project should come with a health warning, the same they put on cigarette packages' Would these levels of pollution be tolerated in Camberwell, Kew or Toorak? Would Brighton residents have any issues with the toxic air their children were breathing? Is Brooklyn just a dump to you?

We are not statistics, we are real people, we are Mothers and Fathers, Sons and Daughters and we are very worried. At the very least why is our health considered less important than those on Francis Street or Somerville Road?



*Figure 93: Change in PM<sub>10</sub> concentration with project (2022 and 2031)*

Please consider the following:

- No tolls on the Westgate Freeway so the trucks can avoid rat running and try operate a profitable business
- A better link to an improved Grieve Parade, with better connections to the Ring Road and the Freeway
- A new link from Somerville Rd to Cemetery Road to Cawley to new on ramps
- Truck bans for Millers in line with what they have on Francis Street
- Permanent pollution monitoring stations on Millers and Geelong Road
- A proper traffic model compiled which includes the precinct 15 and 17 increases
- New North South connection for precinct 15 and 17
- Improve rail and add a passenger line along the railway that runs through Newport, South Kingsville and Brooklyn, adding stations and linking up with Tottenham

Please don't destroy our communities and way of life. You constantly state 'Removing trucks from local Inner West roads', you have made it clear that you don't consider Millers to be one of them. Millers road is local to me, my family and the other 2,000 Brooklyn residents.

Chris Dunlevy, Brooklyn 3012