

6/10/18

## Metro Tunnel Kensington Campaign Update

After some months of negotiation with representatives of the Metro Tunnel project the Kensington Association and local residents have made progress on a number of key issues, but major areas of disagreement still exist. While the Kensington Association is keen to negotiate a comprehensive agreement over management of tunnel works and the subsequent legacy, major points of disagreement exist and a campaign in the lead up to the State election looks increasingly unavoidable.

### Background

Just to refresh the collective community memory, a bit of background:

- Over the next 4 years Rail Projects Victoria (RPV) will work with 2 consortia partners to create the western portal (tunnel entrance) and related works for the Metrorail project.
- The works will occur along the length of Childers Street between Kensington Road and South Kensington station and extend up Hobsons Road into Kensington Banks and to the Lloyd Street Business Park.
- The consortia partners are:
  - Cross Yarra Partnership (CYP) –digging the tunnel and building a large, 3 storey services “bunker” next to South Kensington station
  - the Rail Infrastructure Alliance (RIA) – building ramps down to the tunnel entrance, a 6 metre high flood wall along the length of Childers St and associated works.
- Key issues associated with the works include:
  - Excavation and construction of the ramp and tunnel entrance will require major building works including pile driving and the removal of some 40,000 cubic metres of soil, much of which is contaminated. The works will generate a lot of noise, dust, vibration, heavy vehicles and traffic disruption effecting local residents, the childcare centre, the Venny and the Community Centre.  
*This needs a comprehensive site management plan & continuous hazard monitoring.*
  - The rerouting of traffic into adjoining streets (primarily Derby & Tennyson Streets) creates both hazard and amenity issues for residents and our kids going to school and back.  
*This requires a comprehensive traffic management plan.*
  - The services bunker, ramps and floodwall along with the relocated powerline tower have the potential to leave a legacy of visual pollution and reduced enjoyment of JJ Holland Park, the station and surrounding areas.  
*This requires an integrated design for the works and agreement that at the end of the project, all affected areas are remediated, HV Tower relocated and the South Kensington Station upgraded from its current deplorable state.*

Further background info is available on at: [www.kensingtonassociation.org.au](http://www.kensingtonassociation.org.au)

## So where are we up to?

The Kensington Association working party has now had more than a dozen meetings with one or more key agencies and some progress has been made – but major areas of disagreement are also apparent.

### On a positive note –

- A decent dialogue with the constructors has developed assisted by Vince Haining, Independent Chair of the Community Reference Committee.
- Requests for information are being processed (albeit sometimes pretty slowly). This includes results from our Freedom of Information application and extensive data on traffic, noise impacts and site management arrangements.
- We have made good progress on the **traffic** front:
  - Pretty much agreed the Traffic Management arrangements that will be in place when Childers Street is closed (which will happen quite a bit over the next four years).
  - Agreed arrangements to ensure safe access to South Kensington Station during works.
- After much negotiation, CYP has now agreed to pay for dilapidation studies houses near the station. These studies provide the basis for compensation (and legal action) if houses are damaged by construction works
- We have a greater level of comfort as to how site management will occur.

### On the not-so-good progress front there are some big concerning issues

- If site and hazard management is as good as the constructors say it will be, it is concerning that they won't agree to a comprehensive regime of sound, vibration and air quality monitoring and real time public reporting.

At the most recent meeting the CYP/RPV rejected outright requests to have monitoring results available, in real time, to the public. They offered instead results from monthly reviews of the data. Why can't they be open about this? Apparently, data could be used for "the wrong purposes" (go figure).

- We continue to wait for the results of soil and ground water toxicity testing. This will have a huge impact on risk and site management over the course of the project. (Consider that the equivalent of 5,000 large dump trucks will be needed to store, handle and transport out all the contaminated soil.)

At the last negotiations (4/10/18) CYP/RPV provided, one hour before the negotiations, two cut and pasted pages extracted from the 140 page report!

Your representatives challenged both the content and method and requested at least the executive summary by Wednesday 10/10/18.

- The criteria for relocation of residents effected by construction remains deplorable.
- We do not have agreement on an integrated design approach for the works.

It should be stressed that while we do not have agreement on the above issues, negotiations are continuing, there is (mainly) good will and there are a range of factors that add to the complexity of the process:

- CYP (tunnel) works are well ahead of the RIA (ramps and infrastructure) that has only just been formally appointed to the project. This makes achieving a coordinated approach difficult.
- We are seeking a high level of engagement and transparency that maybe challenges what some companies may consider “reasonable consultation”. (*Not that this will stop us – its our neighbourhood and our kids that we are fighting for.*)
- Multiple parties need to be involved on some issues. So, for example, an integrated design that extends from South Kensington Station to the Maribyrnong River requires not only RPV, CYP and RIA but also the City of Melbourne, the Victorian Government and AUSNET.

We should also take this opportunity to extend an apology to RPV/CYP/RIA.

In a recent notice we stated that:

*“little or no consideration has been given to how construction by-products like noise, dust and vibration are controlled and how to ensure that the end result is something that we can live with....”*

This was incorrect; the project partners have given a lot of consideration to the issues – we just disagree strongly with a number of the conclusions they have reached.

While this project will extend over more than 4 years, what we are fighting for now will shape the impact that the works have on our community and the legacy that is left.

If negotiations fail, we will need to ramp up the fight as we did with the former East-West tunnel proposal that would have devastated Holland Park.

Please:

- Stay tuned
- Watch out for upcoming community actions if negotiations are not successful
- Join the Kensington Association (there is strength in numbers) and
- Contribute to the fighting fund (more on that soon).

Metrorail Working Party  
Kensington Association