



Tunnel stack won't be hidden away

By Alexandra Smith

May 10, 2004

Plans to hide the Cross City Tunnel exhaust stack in a building or mask it behind a work of art have been shelved. The Roads and Traffic Authority will stick to the stack's original design and location.

The ventilation stack, which will stand 60 metres high and 20 metres wide, will be built on land near the Imax cinema at Darling Harbour to carry the fumes of 90,000 vehicles a day.

Moving the site and hiding it in a fake building was considered after a request from the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority but an RTA spokesman said the original plans had not changed.

Narelle Thirkettle, a spokeswoman for Sydneysiders Against Polluting Stacks, said the issue was not about the aesthetics of the stack but the emissions it would send skyward.

She said the State Government should instead decide urgently which of Sydney's tunnels would be part of a filtration trial.

The Roads Minister, Carl Scully, agreed to trial filtration technology in one of the city's tunnels, including the existing M5 East, or the Cross City or Lane Cove tunnels, which are both under construction.

Expressions of interest for the trial, which would involve removing nitrogen dioxide from air in the tunnel, were called for last month.

The RTA spokesman said European or Asian companies - which have extensive tunnel filtration technology - have been encouraged to register interest. The only tunnel the RTA has guaranteed will have filters is the M4 East, which has yet to be approved.

Ms Thirkettle said the filters would be cost-effective for the Cross City Tunnel. "Time is running out for the Cross City Tunnel because its construction is already ahead of schedule and the first sod has been turned on Lane Cove so the RTA has to make a decision now," she said.

CrossCity Motorways has had discussions with the State Government about the stack and the filtration trial.

A spokesman for the company said it was waiting for final advice from the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources on the stack's exterior design. No decision appeared to have been made on the electronic filtration trial, he said.

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