

# GASP

## Groups Against Stack Pollution

PO Box 270 Earlwood NSW 2206 Australia



- v Residents Against Polluting Stacks Inc
- v Lane Cove Tunnel Action Group Inc.
- v Sydneysiders Against Polluting Stacks
- v Cross City Tunnel Action Group

website: [nostack.8m.com](http://nostack.8m.com)

### Media Release 31 March 2004

#### How many more people will be poisoned while the RTA dawdles?

Community groups campaigning for years against unfiltered tunnel stacks in Sydney have welcomed Minister Scully's recognition that vehicle exhaust fumes are harmful to health and that tunnels can and should be filtered to protect drivers, workers and residents alike. However, Groups Against Stack Pollution (GASP), representing the tunnel action groups, are angry that the RTA has been giving the Minister bad advice on this issue for years, and that the Minister has approved a 'trial' of the latest filtration technology in only one of Sydney's road tunnels, together with an undertaking to also install the technology in the proposed M4 East tunnel – if it is approved.

“If the Minister's advisors in the RTA are confident enough to recommend filtration in the proposed M4East tunnel, why is there the need to trial it in only one of the three other tunnels, the M5 East, Cross City or Lane Cove tunnel? And why, more than two weeks after the announcement, and despite numerous requests, is there still no information from the RTA as to how this tendering process is supposed to work?” asked Mark Curran from the M5 East group.

“The RTA has finally advised the Minister of what everyone else has known for years: that filtering stacks is outdated dinosaur technology, that's been replaced by in-tunnel filtration systems, and that it's cheaper and easier to do it at the outset ” said June Hefferan of the Lane Cove Tunnel Action Group. “So we want immediate action, not more stonewalling and smokescreens during a two-year trial in one tunnel. They're installed elsewhere in the world and have been shown to work effectively. Why not install them immediately and in ALL our tunnels?”

“We already have enough evidence that the M5 East is making people sick and should be filtered now”, said Elizabeth George of the Cross City Tunnel Action Group, “and the Cross City and Lane Cove tunnels should be redesigned immediately to save money and avoid future problems. Building what could now be unnecessary ventilation tunnels in the Cross City and Lane Cove tunnels is costing \$100 million. This money can be better used on safeguarding Sydneysiders' health by filtering the poisonous fumes.

GASP is asking Premier Carr and Minister Scully to make good their promise by:

1. putting in place a selection process for appropriate filtration systems that has integrity and transparency. The process cannot be left to the RTA who have been providing the Minister with poor advice on this issue for years. We request that independent experts and community representatives be included in the group to assess the calling for expressions of interest and the selection of the most appropriate designs.
2. directing that work start immediately on retrofitting the M5 East by a call for expressions of interest
3. directing an immediate start on redesigning the Cross City Tunnel to allow the installation of in-tunnel filtration before it is opened in 2005, and redesigning the Lane Cove tunnel before construction commences to allow for efficient use of the filtration technology.

**Contacts:**      **Cross City:** Narelle Thirkettle 92114731      Elizabeth George 0407 012 340  
**Lane Cove:** June Hefferan 0416 095 006      **M5 East:** Mark Curran 95588863 Giselle Mawer 0411 107 153