

A Cost for all Victorians

Transurban's recent profit announcement grossing \$813 Million from CityLink is good news for Transurban investors, but comes at a cost not only for commuters, but for all Victorian consumers.

Transurban have negotiated a deal with the Victorian Government that allows City Link tolls to increase by 4.25% every year until 2029.

The announcement highlighted a 5.5% increase in heavy vehicles, accounting for 20% of CityLink users.

"Trucks now account for 1 in every 5 vehicles on Melbourne's tolled roads, Rail Freight Alliance Chair, Cr Glenn Milne said. What legacy is this Victorian Government leaving for future generations? These additional costs will not just be borne by the users of CityLink; these costs will now be attributed to all Victorians as the costs of goods will increase due to a reliance on road freight in Victoria and increase cost associated with this mode."

The Murray Basin Rail Project (MBRP), heralded by the Andrews Government as removing 20,000 truck movements from the Victorian road network per year and moving more freight on to rail was due to be completed by 2018.

"The MBRP is now at a standstill after Minister Allan has walked away from it, announcing the project was out of funds, with stage 2 of the 5-stage project incomplete. Cr Milne said if ever there was a catalyst to get this project back on track surely an announced 5.5% increase in heavy vehicles would be it"

"If ever there was a time to invest in rail freight in Victoria it is now, the continued reliance on bigger and bigger trucks does nothing for road safety, congestion, amenity nor reduced vehicle emissions. Rail is the most cost effective and safe transport mode for freight, Cr Milne said.

The Murray Basin Rail Project was to be the start of a revival in rail freight in Victoria, for the Andrews government to walk away from this commitment will cost all Victorians dearly.

"With rural and regional Victorians already feeling the Andrews Government have left them high and dry, it appears that Daniel Andrews campaign slogan of "Say What You Do, Do What You Say", doesn't cover all Victorians, but the failure to complete the Murray Basin Rail Project will certainly impact all Victorians. More trucks, bigger trucks, an expensive freight system, will see the cost of living in Victoria continue to rise as will Transurban's revenue. Cr Milne said."

ENDS

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