



Photo by Andrew Chuter

## A totally despicable act

By Peter Hehir

Never before has a NSW Government shown such cynicism and contempt for democratic process.

Glad the Impaler has announced the signing of the Stage 3 b contracts for the Rozelle Interchange and the Iron Cove Tunnel *just one day prior to the release of the findings of the WestConnex Parliamentary Inquiry*; an inquiry that the NSW Government did its level best to prevent. And when they failed, they then unleashed the very worst of their attack dogs, in a despicable attempt to bully, deride and demean the ordinary citizens who had the courage to appear before it.

Vindictive, cruel, vicious, malicious, vengeful, ruthless, spiteful and retaliatory are words that clamour to be used. Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. And their abuse of power knows no bounds.

The definition of stupidity is to attempt the same task over and over, again and again, expecting a different outcome. But to describe the RMS and Berejiklian's NSW Government as stupid is being much too kind.

No one anywhere in the world has ever been able to solve the issue of the inevitable bottlenecks that occur when a freeway interfaces with the local road network. This phenomena is a given. A conundrum without a solution, forcing the perceptive among us to accept the reality that city freeways aren't a solution – that they induce traffic and traffic chaos; and can only ever be a major part of the problem. This is an immutable fact. Just as certain as night follows day.

At White Bay six massive traffic streams from the 3 multi lane tunnel portals, Victoria Road, the Anzac Bridge and the City West Link all collide within a few metres of each other. How can anything but total chaos ensue?

White Bay will also become the epicentre of toxicity.

Surrounding suburbs will be drenched in hundreds of tonnes of carcinogenic diesel particulates. This lethal material will be spewed out from the four unfiltered stacks each and every day of each and every year, taking the poisonous plumes wherever the wind blows, into the homes of ordinary people, rich and poor alike.

This is an act of political bastardry that beggars belief. To wilfully condemn whole suburbs by deliberately poisoning the air is beyond criminal. Genocide pure and simple.

Describing Berejiklian as being two faced is being much too charitable. She knows that unfiltered stacks are lethal. She said so in the NSW Parliament in 2008 while attacking the Labor Party for not filtering the Lane Cove Tunnel exhaust stacks.

The ALP are not blameless in all of this. In spite of the deliberate attempts to muddy the local waters in relation to their support for WestConnex, they *are* supporters of Inner City freeways. Shorten is on record as saying WestConnex will proceed. And Shorten is driving the Labor truck. It doesn't matter what Albanese, Plibersek, Byrne or the Labor candidate for Balmain say.

Is it just a coincidence that the areas in the Inner West most affected by WestConnex are those electorates that have rejected both of the major parties?

Areas populated by educated, intelligent, informed and enlightened voters who actually care about the quality of the air that we breathe and accept the need to act in relation to global warming; who can clearly see the nexus between tollroads, fossil fuel and climate change.

The ALP has never forgiven itself for walking away from the environment. It began when Hawke did his backflip on uranium. They've realized that the terrier gnawing at their heels simply wouldn't exist had they not abrogated their environmental responsibilities. Their guilt manifests itself daily in the vitriol and hostility that they reserve for Australia's third largest political party.

Again the words vindictive, cruel, vicious, malicious, vengeful, ruthless, spiteful and retaliatory spring to mind.

The irony of the ALP voting with the Neo Cons to defeat the Greens is not lost on those of us who are unaligned; or cynical even about the political process; who look on in amazement as the ALP continues to wear their blinkers as a badge of pride; while they unashamedly stride to the right, accepting that fouling the nest is an inevitable price to pay for "growth" and "progress".

Accepting that it's OK to sacrifice a few thousand people for misplaced perceptions of the greater good. That extinctions of species and whole eco systems are both justifiable and inevitable collateral damage.

The ALP have said that they absolutely, positively refuse to tear up the contracts. They cite sovereign risk. So this means that the Iron Cove Tunnel and the Rozelle Interchange cannot be stopped. This also means the construction of about 40% of the Western Harbour Tunnel – which is being built as part of Stage 3 b, is also a fiat accompli.

There will be two elections in 2019. One in March where Glad the Impaler is thrown out with the rest of the rubbish and another where the same fate awaits Scomo. But I'd give anything to see the

electorate rise up in revolt against *both* of the parties who are tearing the heart and soul out of our Inner West communities...