

SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION

TIMETABLE

At the CBD Community Forum, we were told that the Government expects to sign the contract for the CESLR “by Christmas”.

The Government should not be signing the contract before the preparation of a submissions report and a determination on the modifications application.

CONSULTATIONS

There is a suspicion that the government is pursuing a “crash through” approach without properly considering submissions in accordance with the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

In relation to the REF for the Sydney City Centre Capacity Improvement Plan, Roads and Maritime Services maintains that there urgency to their proposed works (and therefore they decline to extend the REF exhibition period even though it crosses the holiday period) because of CESLR, even though they maintain it is a separate project to CESLR.

The consent conditions for CESLR required that the community forums be established by 1 September. It is true that a meeting of the Community Reference Group took place a few days before then, but not with community representatives and only with an acting chairman.

Community Forum meetings are called without proper notice and without papers for discussion being distributed before the meeting. Minutes of meetings are approved by TfNSW, not the meetings themselves. Only ten minutes is set aside for members of the community to ask questions. TfNSW determine when meetings will close, not the meetings themselves. All this is entirely contrary to the well-established rules that we have in Australia for the conduct of meetings. The REF is less than candid about consultations.

COST OF THE PROJECT WITH THE MODIFICATIONS

The EIS does not disclose the revised cost of the project once the modifications are included. This is said to be for commercial reasons. It is standard practice in many countries for the prices tendered for a proposed contract to be disclosed, and a standard requirement of international organisations such as the Asian Development Bank.

The cost is central to the evaluation of alternatives. The suspicion is growing that the cost of the CESLR per km is now greater than the cost per km of extending the Eastern Suburbs Railway, especially when the cost of related projects such as the Sydney City Centre Capacity Improvement Project and the costs of all mitigation measures are included.