



## EAST-WEST LINK

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# Dire health effects from increased car use

Perhaps if the 43 per cent who voted for the road link were aware of the dire health impacts arising from increased vehicle emissions, they would have opted for the healthier option of rail ("Poll shows public prefers rail tunnel ahead of road link", 27/5).

According to an OECD report, urban air pollution will become the top cause of environment-related deaths globally by mid-century unless action is taken, while another report in the *American Journal of Epidemiology* linked traffic pollution to increased risk of birth defects. Besides being linked to respiratory and cardiac diseases and cancers, traffic-related air pollution has also been linked with complications in pregnancy.

The health effects and subsequent financial burden to the community are too high for a short-term solution to congestion. The rail tunnel and a line to Doncaster along the Eastern Freeway are the healthier, enlightened (and cheaper) options.

**Ruth Clemens, Richmond**

## Come clean on cost

Rod Eddington estimated in 2008 that the east-west link would cost \$9 billion in 2007 dollars. Why is anyone seriously suggesting in 2013 that it's a \$6 billion to \$8 billion project? Some \$10-\$12 billion is more realistic - more than double the cost of the regional rail link, Australia's biggest transport infrastructure project. The toll road would mean not a brass razoo left over for years for better signalling, grade separations, train or tram line extensions, new trains, trams and buses, better bike lanes or any of the other vital things we urgently need and know would actually help unclog Melbourne, not clog us up worse than ever.

**Alison Clarke, Clifton Hill**

## Consistently the highest priority

It is no surprise that support for public transport - symbolised by the Metro rail tunnel - came out ahead of the east-west road link. The poll mirrors the result of every similar poll conducted over the past decade. Most notably, the University of Sydney's quarterly Transport Opinion Survey consistently rates public transport the highest priority transport issue among nearly two-thirds of Victorian respondents, compared with about one-fifth who rate roads as highest priority.

**Tony Morton, president, Public Transport Users Association**

## Stand up for public land

Did you visit a park this weekend? Use a sports ground? Walk around a lake? Picnic with friends? Or just enjoy the peace and the wildlife? Best capture those memories before they become a thing of the past. Royal Park, Melbourne's largest bush park, and all its sports facilities are about to be trashed. It's my park, so I care a lot about its demise - but it is also your park. Royal Park is the lungs of the city - vital in offsetting the pollution of its rapidly growing population. My park, neighbourhood and perhaps my home will be ruined. Yours could be next. Stand up for public land before it, too, becomes extinct.

**Margaret Jungwirth, Parkville**