

NEW HEALTH STUDY ON LANE COVE TUNNEL

NSW health environmental health director, Dr Michael Staff today announced the start of the independent Lane Cove Tunnel health study by the national Cooperative Research Centre for Asthma and Airways.

The health survey entitled *Air Quality and Respiratory Health Study* to commence this week will follow the health of the residents of 2000 households near the Lane Cove Tunnel and monitor their physical condition over a 12-month period.

"The Environmental Impact Assessment done as part of the approval process for the project confirmed that local air pollution is expected to improve with the opening of the tunnel due to the traffic reduction on surface roads bypassed by the tunnel," said Dr Staff.

Dr Staff said the study presents an opportunity to research the health of the community before and after the opening of the tunnel, enabling health experts to accurately assess the change in traffic movement on the wellbeing of the nearby population.

"The study will answer concerns the local residents may have about air pollution and provides public health experts and the Roads and Traffic Authority with additional information to assist in future transport planning decisions," said Dr Staff.

NSW Health has formed a steering group to guide the study design and implementation comprised of experts in the disciplines of public health, environmental epidemiology, exposure modelling, air quality research and biostatistics.

Professor Bruce Armstrong, Professor of Public Health from the University of Sydney will chair the group.

Dr Staff said adults and children would be involved in the study. Participants will be invited to answer questionnaires, fill in a daily diary and take lung function tests to determine their lung capacity before the tunnel opens and the year after the tunnel opens.

A final report will be made publicly available through NSW Health at the conclusion of the study, expected to be early 2008.

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