

# Expert says \$60m road project is a disaster

By LINDA MORRIS  
Transport Writer

The \$60 million Eastern Distributor extension is a primitive solution to Sydney's chronic traffic congestion, according to a visiting professor of transport planning.

Professor Tim Pharoah, reader in Transport and Urban Planning at London's Southbank University, said it would prove to be an "unmitigated disaster", as had the M25 ring road in London.

He said the planning of Sydney was old-fashioned, dominated by "petrol heads", and at least 25 years behind Europe, which had recognised that motorways had not solved traffic chaos and had moved to expand public transport.

Sydney was entranced with motorways, its rail network was too small to serve its population of 4 million, and its bus network "went to sleep" after 7 in the evening.

But he said Sydney had a chance to reverse its poor transport record because its dense inner-city core could support new public transport links.

Professor Pharoah, a recipient of the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee fellowship, is in Australia to brief government transport and planning officials on how Britain is handling its transport problems.

He has called for greater co-ordination, and the merger if necessary, of the departments of roads and transport to ensure that transport planning in Syd-

ney is properly co-ordinated and considers environmental impacts. There was a strong case for all cities to ban private parking and severely limit public parking within their CBDs.

"I would say Sydney is in the process of destroying itself from within, sacrificing itself to the petrol heads who seem to think there is a way to build yourself out of congestion," he said.

"The problem is you have too much emphasis on road transport in this city, the rail network is relatively small to service 4 million people, the bus network goes to sleep at seven o'clock in the evening and most people seem to think that the way forward is to provide for their mobility in the city primarily with the car.

"Coming from London and Europe this kind of approach, to put it kindly, is a bit archaic. We've seen the problems that arise from attempting to build urban freeways as a way of trying to solve transport problems."

Professor Pharoah, who is to give a public lecture at State Parliament tonight, was especially critical of the Eastern Distributor project, which he said would only transfer traffic congestion from Taylor Square to other parts of the city.

There was no evidence that the Eastern Distributor or any other road would take traffic from local streets and leave them "quiet and peaceful": "Here you are spending millions of dollars to replicate your problems on a larger scale."



Aussie si