

We The People  
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We the People 371 Tom's Trojan Tram



**Good Day to You.** The Trojan Horse is a tale from the Trojan War and of the brilliant subterfuge the Greeks used to enter the city of Troy. After many fruitless attempts the Greeks built a large wooden horse and left it outside the gates. The people of Troy pulled the horse into the city out of curiosity. That night a force of Greek soldiers came out of the horse and Troy fell. Thus the metaphor of the Trojan horse representing a sinister plan began.

I am of the view the Gold Coast tram is a Trojan Horse with an unseen enemy within being the high rise redevelopment of the coastline. It's about as shonky as it gets where a stealth corridor 1.6km wide of high rise, high density wipes out all before it. There is however another enemy at the gates and it's an enemy we have seen before. I was reminded of this by an independent lady Council candidate for division 12. She has rightly pointed out that there is no compensation plan for business as the construction of the tram line labours forward. We saw the mess in surfers Paradise and Southport when the Trojan Tram came through and the business that went broke or cut back on staff. Many customers have not returned since and its clear this Council, the State government and the Commonwealth do not give a toss. While the Mayor carries on about tourism and the like it appears he has no effective plan for adversely affected small business as to how they will deal with massive disruption not of their making. The Gold Coast Council wanted the Tram so it's only right and fair they help small business survive the disruption stage. Have we lost sight of fairness and equity and of moral obligation, well it seems so. These are the businesses which are the backbone of the Gold Coast and Australia working 365 days a year to provide services and jobs. Our un-named independent candidate also observes the big end of town are not motivated to help either because she says they're only concerned about themselves. Candidate X was also very disappointed with the cavalier attitude displayed by her rival candidates in not supporting her call for protection of the impacted businesses. She believes Gold Coast business is sick of their representatives passing the buck and she has a powerful and relevant point.

We have another tram benchmark to refer to and that's the Tram in Sydney which has been an unmitigated disaster. Delays, budget overruns, business destroyed, noise, mistakes and poor planning and it now runs at a loss. These light rail projects are notoriously complex to plan and deliver particularly in densely-packed urban centers and the eventual benefits often don't meet the lofty expectations set at a project's outset. The tendency for troubled, underwhelming light rail projects to fail is prevalent enough that it even got a high-profile pop culture mention in the The Simpsons in the early 90s. However this is not a laughing matter for the many small businesses along the route in the next stage of construction. When a small business goes broke many families suffer as the effects ripple through society. At the beginning of the planning process the politicians work backward having first made the decision to proceed. They then produce a dubious '**cost benefit analysis**' to justify their ill-conceived notion. Here is a good example of a dubious accounting practice of including "**non-use values**". Put simply the bean counters place an artificial value on the asset not being used and this fairground concept is then used to justify some of the expenses and increase apparent returns. To 'we the mugs' it's pure fantasy and it's misdirection at best. Australian National University economist Professor Leo Dobes advises that "**the inclusion of 'non-use values' in the cost-benefit analysis is very, very dicey stuff**". In other words its BS. So there you have it as the antiquated tram rolls on and small business is treated as collateral damage and largely ignored by an indifferent Council. So, vote for truly independent candidates at the Council elections who will properly represent we the people and common sense.

**Until next time this is Kent Bayley**