

Rally review raises questions of credibility

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and graphs are used to try to lend credibility but in this case it doesn't. It lacks that framework of being a rigorous analysis.

"I'm not saying that the rally is good or bad, just that it needs a more transparent and rigorous process and to acknowledge the concerns of all sides, not minimise them, and that's what underpins good consultation.

"75% of the submissions were categorised as against the rally so how do you draw the conclusion that's a minority of people? It's inconsistent. The people who have taken the interest to write a submission actually care about the rally and it's not appropriate to dismiss them. It does not analyse those submissions. Hand them on to me and I would happily do an analysis. Anyone who knows anything about public analysis should know that this report marginalises community concerns, it throws them out very quickly. People have spent hours preparing those and to cover them in three lines does an injustice to the time and effort of the

people who put them in. "The way this is written is more likely to inflame than address the key community issues."

Dr Stephen Phillips, a koala expert from Biolink consulting, prepared the original environmental report before the rally. The independent reviewer did not contact Dr Phillips for a post-event interview. Dr Phillips went along to one of the community consultation nights but after listening for a while, left quietly without saying anything.

Greens MLC Ian Cohen, who has been a critic of the rally, said he thought the parliamentary report was "unhelpful".

"It marginalises people who are protesting, of course it's a small number compared to the overall population. I just find it's a bit trite and prejudicial and if this is particular of the attitude of the government to try to legislate such an event in that area I find it reprehensible and I think it will lead to bigger protests next time, if there is a next time," Mr Cohen said. "It's pretty disappointing that we don't have better transparency than that and I have real concerns about general

assessments that were being taken, having gone to a public meeting where significant questions were asked. This report is promotional rather than an appropriate assessment."

In his report Mr Cahill states that he canvassed attitudes extensively with anti-rally activists, stating that "while those anti-rally activists interviewed were engaged in their communities, universally they demonstrated no empathy for motor sports supporters and little empathy for working people".

Andrea Vickers said it was a common misconception.

"We've encountered this a lot, it's a classic conservative attempt to discredit us. Our core membership includes doctors, teachers, nurses, lawyers, disability support workers, public servants, local tourism operators, small business owners, an OAM recipient and a Justice of the Peace," Ms Vickers said.

The Echo sent eight questions to NSW Treasurer and Minister for Industry and Investment Eric Roozendaal and received

a statement from a spokesperson in return which did not clearly answer any of the specific questions.

"The NSW Government has accepted all of the recommendations made by the review and will be engaging in further consultation with the community well ahead of the 2011 event," the statement said. "Consultation will include any proposed change in the rally route. In this regard, the NSW Government has instructed the Homebush Motor Racing Authority to meet with the stakeholders in the region and Rally Australia to discuss the review recommendations."

When *The Echo* contacted Mr Cahill to ask him to clarify his qualifications, the selection process, methodology and conclusions he accused *The Echo* of "trying to be too clever", and being "overly aggressive" and said he had won a Walkley Award for regional journalism.

"This whole thing has been hijacked by a couple of neurotic people; it's all about local politics and people should just get over it," Mr Cahill said.

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