

## The decision to decide – a discussion on tunnel fire safety

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In the mid 1990's the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB), Melbourne commenced consultation with the State Authority regarding the fire safety provisions and emergency management expectations for a dual tunnel project as part of a proposed major road infrastructure development. On 23 March 2007, a major collision involving several vehicles in the CityLink's Burnley Tunnel resulted in a significant fire event that tested the effectiveness of the tunnel's safety systems and the emergency management capabilities of the tunnel operator and responding emergency services. This paper will challenge traditional design decision making through the exploration of the consultation that occurred in relation to the CityLink project a decade ago as well as the risk management principles that guided fire system selection and specification. The paper will also engender discussion on the principles of risk versus consequence management when establishing fire safety benchmarks and the application of a building legislative framework to major tunnel projects in the built environment.