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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I make the following submission to the Environmental Impact Statement (**EIS**) exhibition for the Westconnex M4 East Tunnel Project (**Project**) (SSI 6307).

I object to this project on the grounds that no business case has been provided, and the independent study by SGS commissioned by the City of Sydney concludes that the project is “highly unlikely to be viable.” As detailed in the report, WestConnex shares the key characteristics of other failed tunnel projects (the Cross City Tunnel and Lane Cove Tunnel in particular), which did not connect major employment hubs, were very expensive, overstated the eventual ridership, and cost taxpayers massive losses. The 15 billion dollars for this project would be much more effective if spent on public transport projects.

The justifications given in the EIS for building roads instead of enhancing public transport do not appear valid. For example it is stated that more road capacity is needed for freight shipping, but currently, most traffic on Parramatta road during peak hours consists of private cars rather than commercial vehicles, so the existing road capacity would be adequate if public transport were more convenient for some of the drivers of those private cars. The project was originally motivated to provide easy road access to Kingsford-Smith airport from the western suburbs, but now that a new airport is planned at Badgerys Creek this justification has all but evaporated. Overseas, countries like the US are moving away from such big-road projects because they cause as many problems as they solve. Currently, the level of taxpayer subsidy received by TransportNSW is pathetically low (roughly 1% of operating revenues if I’ve understood the last financial report correctly) compared to the significant social capital that a public transport system generates.

WestConnex Stage I will almost certainly create severe traffic congestion in Haberfield and Ashfield, basically moving the current congestion near Strathfield eastward. Given the likely financial disaster of Stage I, it is unlikely that the subsequent stages would ever be built, making this traffic calamity quasi-permanent.

The air pollution modelling given in the EIS appears to neglect the additional car traffic that will be lured into the area by the new tunnel. The total emissions of microparticles (PM2.5 and smaller), whose serious long-term health effects are only recently becoming evident, can only increase as a result of this extra traffic. Although air quality overall in Sydney is relatively good, new research in the last two years shows that there is no safe level of exposure to PM2.5 from automobiles. The tunnel and stack system will redistribute this pollution, but will not change the total amount generated—moreover the east stack is located very close to Haberfield Public primary school. Only additional ridership of public transport can reduce total pollution.

The treatment of homeowners who are being forced out of their homes and offered fire-sale compensation is reprehensible and represents yet another subsidy for this road. Just as bad, the traffic that will result wherever the tunnel disgorges its cars will reduce the amenity and property values of hundreds more homes, another subsidy.

*Therefore, all work should be stopped on this project until a credible business case is provided which shows greater net benefits to the community than an equivalent amount of money spent on rail or other public transport projects, and until it can be guaranteed that the whole project will go ahead, including the mooted remediation of Parramatta Road.*

If it is decided to push ahead with this project anyway, in spite of the expected financial failure and drastic negative impact it will have on quality of life in Haberfield and Ashfield, I request that the following actions be taken to mitigate the impacts of this project on the inner west communities it will hurt.

1. Please improve cycling access around the corridor. For one thing please install a pedestrian and cycle bridge across Parramatta Road to link Ashfield Park to Haberfield. This would provide a safer crossing for the many children from Ashfield who attend school and day care in Haberfield and for Haberfield residents to use the park.
2. The completed project should explicitly include a light rail and/or designated bus/cycle lane(s) along the entire stretch of Parramatta road through the Inner West. There would be significant demand for a cycleway aligned with Parramatta Rd., which is currently too dangerous to cycle on; alternative east-west pathways through the inner west are very difficult to navigate (which is why the road itself is so busy). Light rail would be transformative in economically revitalising the corridor.
3. Similarly a pedestrian and bike bridge over Wattle St. at Waratah to connect Haberfield to Timbrell Park would be very helpful to the community.
4. Please collect base-level data on traffic volumes on Haberfield streets between Ramsay and Parramatta Rd. (Dalhousie, Rogers, Chandos, Bland, Alt, Walker, Denman), and Church, Frederick and Elizabeth streets in Ashfield, both before construction begins, during works, and after completion.
5. If any streets exceed acceptable increases, require steps to be taken to return the streets to acceptable levels (e.g., road closures, speed bumps, supervised crossings).
6. Remove the right turn from Wattle onto Waratah St. Otherwise there will be “rat runs” through Haberfield to get around blockages of Parramatta road at the tunnel exit.
7. Provide a fund for the Ashfield and Haberfield community (perhaps through Council) to address the unexpected consequences of this road both during construction (including noise abatement that may be required) and afterward.
8. Proper compensation should be provided to people whose homes are not required but live near the works.

Please consider my concerns and address them in your response to the community's submissions to the EIS.

Political Donation Declaration: I have not made any donations exceeding \$1000 in the requisite period.

Regards,

Steven Sherwood