

From: Cameron White,
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Re: Westconnex East EIS Objection

To whom it may concern,

I object to the Westconnex East project on the basis of inadequate consideration of 'integrated transport improvements'.

The Westconnex East EIS describes the project as an 'integrated package of transport improvements' which include 'complementary enhancements to the existing road network, a redesign of bus services and facilities, improved access to rail stations, and upgrades to cyclist and pedestrian facilities'. In particular, the EIS argues that the Westconnex East project 'complements' several key New South Wales Transport planning documents. These include:

- *Sydney's Rail Future: Modernising Sydney's Trains* (Transport for NSW 2012b) regarding the need to 'improve the Western Rail Line, which runs parallel to the project'.
- *Sydney's Bus Future: Simpler, faster, better bus services* (Transport for NSW 2013a). WestConnex would *assist in* introducing a bus rapid transit route along Parramatta Road in the long term, by providing an alternative route for longer distance trips (the project) along the M4 and Parramatta Road corridor. Once in place, this bus rapid transit route *could* be upgraded to light rail, to respond to the increased transport demand associated with population growth along Parramatta Road (Transport for NSW 2013a).
- *Sydney's Light Rail Future: Expanding public transport, revitalising our city* (Transport for NSW 2012c). The longer term WestConnex *may* allow road

space to be reallocated on City Road or Parramatta Road to allocate space to public transport in the University of Sydney corridor, the area that services the Universities to the west of Sydney CBD. Four light rail routes linking to Parramatta CBD are under investigation. One of these would connect the CBD to Sydney Olympic Park, running parallel to the existing M4 and the project to Burwood/Strathfield.

- *Sydney's Cycling Future* (Transport for NSW 2013b). Westconnex East will 'maintain and, where feasible, improving network connectivity'.
- *Sydney's Walking Future* (Transport for NSW 2013c) Westconnex East would 'improve urban amenity and road safety, contributing to an improved pedestrian environment'.

However the 'complementary' and 'integrated character of the Westconnex East project remains ill-defined and unquantified. These inadequacies reflect braider debates about the poor quality of planning and lack of independent oversight. These inadequacies were highlighted by the NSW Auditor General's 2014 Performance Audit of Westconnex. These inadequacies have also been highlighted at the Federal level.

- Recent Australian Productivity Commission and Treasury Inquiries suggest: 'Decisions are often based on inadequate and non-transparent information and assessment of the costs and benefits of road projects'; 'Roads are the least reformed of all infrastructure sectors, with institutional arrangements around funding and provision remaining much the same as they were 20 years ago' (Harper et al 2015; Productivity Commission 2014).

- An 'Australian Infrastructure Audit' by the independent federal advisory body Infrastructure Australia highlighted the inconsistent 'use and transparent reporting of cost benefit analyses'. It argued that, while 'market reforms have significantly improved the efficiency and competitiveness of the energy sector and more recently the telecommunications sector... [there is] a pressing need to commence the task of moving towards alternative institutional and governance arrangements in the roads sector' (Infrastructure Australia 2015).

The costs of the Westconnex East project are enormous. They relate to economic costs as well as the destruction of heritage, biodiversity, greenspace, habitat and residential amenity. The inadequate analysis of the 'complementary' and 'integrated' public transport components of the Westconnex East project undermine the project's claims relating to the reduction of congestion, pollution and greenhouses gas emissions.

Westconnex East does not represent an 'integrated' or complementary approach to urban transport. It is a massive, poorly conceived, stand-alone roads project that does not adequately address issues relating to environmental impact management or cost-benefit ratio.

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