

Hello,

My name is Anthony Gibbins. I live in Unit 3/95 Euston Rd Alexandria and this is my submission regarding the West Connect.

Unlike many unfortunate people, the West Connect will not effect the actual building in which I live, but it will have significant negative consequences for my neighborhood.

It is not at all difficult to build a case against the West Connect. I have seen the submissions of many other individuals and organisations opposed to the West Connect – including Sydney Council – that are far more detailed than mine will be. I have no doubt that the building of the road is a mistake. What I wish to point out here are more personal observations.

Firstly, I have been told that the road is going to be built. I was told by employees of the planning department that the road 'will be built' long before the EIS submissions had been required, let alone read. I was told by an employee of the planning department that it would be built because 'Mike Baird' wants it to be built. I personally think that whether or not the premier wants a road built should be irrelevant to the independent organisation entrusted with the responsibility of examining the EIS.

I have an acquaintance that knows the planning minister, Rob Stokes, quite well. She says he is a lovely man. She asked him about the building of the West Connect and he said that he was personally apposed to it; that it was backward thinking in this day and age to build such a road. She then told me that he said that he was powerless to interfere because Duncan Gay wanted it to go ahead, and roads was Duncan's area of influence. I interpreted this differently than she did. I read this as Rob not wanting to 'rock the boat' within his own party, and putting this ahead of his responsibilities as planning minister.

On the subject of Duncan Gay, he seems ill-equipped to make decisions of this magnitude. In a televised interview he said that only 'hippies' objected to the building of the road, and made it clear that 'hippies' did not deserve to have their opinions taken into consideration. In all of the literature released by the government and the company building the West Connect, none of it acknowledged ANY of the many negatives effects of the project. This is anathema to genuine debate and transparency.

I imagine the organisers of the West Connect will continue to praise themselves for the 'high' level of community consultation they say they have undertaken. This is a completely deluded version of the truth. I attended two community information days, and on both occasions was shocked at how little anyone could or would tell me. Over and over again I was told – and this was the experience of others I spoke to also – that X could help you with that question. After waiting for ten minutes for X he or she would send you to Y who would send you to Z who would try to send you back to the person you began with. Here is a transcript of an actual conversation:

Worried Resident: What is going to happen to the cars after they enter onto Euston Rd? Where will they go after the lights?

WCGuy: I do not have that information. X can help you with that.

Me: No, actually, she can't. I've just been speaking with her and she does not know.

WCGuy: Well, Y can help you then.

Me: No, he can't. I spoke to him and he sent me to X.

WCGuy: Well I don't know.

[Residents then asked another three questions that WCGuy said he was unable to answer].

Me: This is not really working. Perhaps you could tell us what you do know and we could ask you about that.

WCGuy: I have an overview knowledge of the entire project. (Long pause – I did not interrupt).

Me: That is a little vague to be helpful. Could you please be more specific about what you actually know?

WCGuy: Why don't you ask me questions and I'll answer them if I can.

Me: We've tried that and it obviously isn't working.

[At this point WCGuy simply walked off].

So, the above question concerning Euston Rd. What a joke. NO ONE involved in the construction of West Connect could tell us what was going to happen to the 55,000 additional cars estimated to be using West Connect daily. No one! EVERYONE was super sympathetic and made a show of empathising with how terribly frustrating it must be. But NO ONE had an answer. Anyone with a brain and half an eyeball could see that there needed to be a plan in place for these extra cars, and yet – as far as I can tell – there still is not one. It is absurd.

Before I go I'd like to say what I really think. I think the road, if it goes ahead, will do great damage to our neighborhood and beyond. It will rip up trees, steal land from the park, force families to move, generate more cars on our roads and – potentially – destroy King Street. And, I don't think the powers that want this road built really care. At my more cynical moments I think of Duncan Gay's 'hippies' remark and wonder if – indeed – he revels in the idea. After all, he does not live in the area, and the good folk who do live here tend not to elect his buddies in the Liberal Party.

There is SO MUCH more to be said, but I know that others are saying it. The case against the road is so strong. The decision made will not only determine

the future of the project. It will also send a signal as to whether the EIS procedure has any genuine credibility. I hope you make the right decision.

Anthony Gibbins