

WestConnex Advocacy Strategy

Introduction

The WestConnex project has a potentially significant impact on the Newtown precinct. The NPBA has a duty to the local business community to ensure we have the most up to date information, identify what impact this project may have on our Precinct and advocate to minimise this impact.

Executive Summary

This strategy document outlines the how the NPBA will be advocating for our members and the local business community. We will cover the following topics

1. A brief overview of the project
2. Our advocacy strategy
3. A timeline of activity

In this strategy we will outline how we will achieve our key objectives which are

1. Ensure we have the most up to date information
2. Identify and analyse the potential impact to the Precinct
3. Produce solutions to reduce any potential impact
4. Liaise with all of our constituents to communicate our position and gain support
5. Deliver these suggestions to the Westconnex Delivery Authority and communicate their responses to our stakeholders
6. Take the necessary action to minimise the impact on our members and the broader business community

The NPBA will do everything in its power to protect our business community and minimise the potential impact of Westconnex.

The WestConnex Project

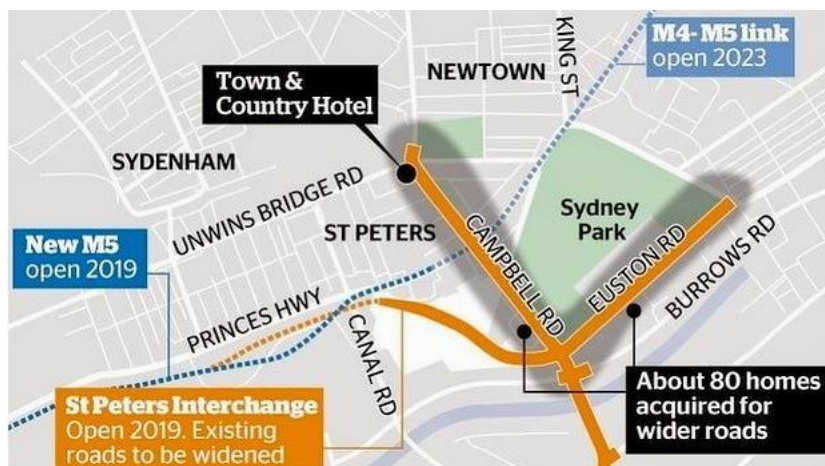
This project will be built in three stages

1. Stage 1 – M4 – Parramatta to Haberfield – Completed 2019
 - Stage 1 of WestConnex will provide a widened M4, from Church Street, Parramatta to near Concord Road and an extension of the M4 via a tunnel under the Parramatta Road corridor to Parramatta Road and City West Link, Haberfield.
2. Stage 2 – M5 East Airport Link – Beverly Hills to St Peters – Completed 2020
 - Stage 2 will provide increased capacity along the M5 East corridor and extend the motorway to St Peters. It will also include a new access link to the Sydney Airport area
3. Stage 3 – M4 South – Haberfield to St Peters Completed 2023
 - Stage 3 will deliver a motorway tunnel with three lanes in each direction between stages 1 and 2

Our primary point of concern is the gap between the completion of stage 2 (2020) and stage 3 (2023).

With no clear understanding from the NSW state government or the Westconnex Delivery Authority on how traffic will be managed in this three year period, we must assume that the impact to King St will require changes in its traffic management. Below

is the proposed St Peters Interchange location



More detailed information can be found at <http://www.westconnex.com.au/>

Our Advocacy Strategy

With the limited information we have at hand, our strategy is based on the following activity

1. Ensure we have the most up to date information
2. Identify and analyse the potential impact to the Precinct
3. Produce solutions to reduce any potential impact
4. Liaise with all of our constituents to communicate our position and gain support
5. Liaise with the Westconnex Delivery Authority on a regular basis
6. Take the necessary action to ensure it is communicated and heard

Ensure we have the most up to date information

We are currently in the process of meeting with the relevant government bodies and local groups

- Senior representatives from the Westconnex Delivery Authority
- Marrickville Mayor Cnr Mark Gardiner
- City of Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore
- Federal Member for Grayndler & Minister for Infrastructure and Transport Anthony Albanese
- Federal member for Sydney Tanya Plibersek
- Local Resident Action groups
- Local Councillors

These conversations will provide us with a better understanding of what has been confirmed for this project and what is yet to be decided. We will ensure that we communicate the information we have to our members and local groups in the Newtown area.

Identify and analyse the potential impact to the Precinct

Once we have met with these stakeholders we will have the information necessary to analyse the potential impact to our Precinct. Analysing the information we currently have, the potential impact we have identified is the following

- With no clear indication of traffic management between the completion of stages 2 & 3, there will be a substantial increase in the amount of vehicle traffic through the streets of our Precinct, namely King St, during this 5 year period
- We therefore assume that there would need to be amendments in the way that the clearways are managed on King St
- Any increase in the allocated times of clearways on King St will be vehemently opposed by the NPBA and we will take all necessary actions to ensure our opposition to this is heard

We have recent precedence relating to the impact that increased access for large vehicle numbers has on iconic roadways. The impact sustained by the business community on Parramatta Rd is well documented and is what the NPBA will be advocating to avoid at all costs.

Increased access to large volumes of traffic was catastrophic for the businesses along Parramatta Rd. If required, we will qualify our assumption of any assimilation to this precedent by engaging professionals to analyse the impact and give us unrefusable evidence for our communications.

Produce Solutions to reduce any potential impact

Creating traffic management solutions is not in our mandate. However, we can engage professionals to do this on behalf of the NPBA and our members.

The NPBA has access to urban planning professionals who are qualified to analyse the current plans for this project and suggest alternatives that will help to reduce the impact on our stakeholders.

It is our intention to engage with the Westconnex Delivery Authority and the proponents of the tender process, to communicate the thoughts of our constituents, provide the information we will commission and seek to have their plans include our suggestions.

As this is a long term project, we would seek to have regular opportunities for the Authority and the tender proponents to engage with our stakeholders. We believe that open lines of communication with all concerned will help in the delivery of this project and help to reduce any potential negative impact.

Liaise with our Constituents

Communicating and representing our members is the primary concern of the NPBA. As this project has far reaching consequences, we want to ensure we are in regular communication with key groups our precinct. These include

1. The Newtown Precinct business community, both members and non-members
2. City of Sydney and Marrickville Council
3. The Newtown Neighbourhood Centre
4. Community Action Groups

To ensure we can communicate effectively, we have a communications plan to ensure we deliver information as it comes to hand. We will achieve this through

1. Immediate email updates to key contacts in the list of constituents above
2. A dedicated page on our website
3. A page on our consumer facing facebook page dedicated to updates
4. This page will also provide a forum to make comments and receive feedback
5. Verbal updates, discussions and forums at our monthly member meetings
6. Meetings with our constituents to discuss key activities and updates

Liaise with the Westconnex Delivery Authority on a regular basis

We are currently in the process of meeting with the Authority to open our lines of communication. It is our intention to create open dialogue with the Authority and work with them through the planning phase into the delivery of the project.

Take Necessary Action

In the interim period, the NPBA is taking a very open position regarding Westconnex. We understand that traffic congestion is a city wide issue and infrastructure must be put in place to reduce it.

Also, we are not going to react in response to unconfirmed information. For example, there has been no confirmation of increased clearways on King St. We deal with facts and our mission is to identify these and form our position in reaction to these facts

What we will vehemently oppose is

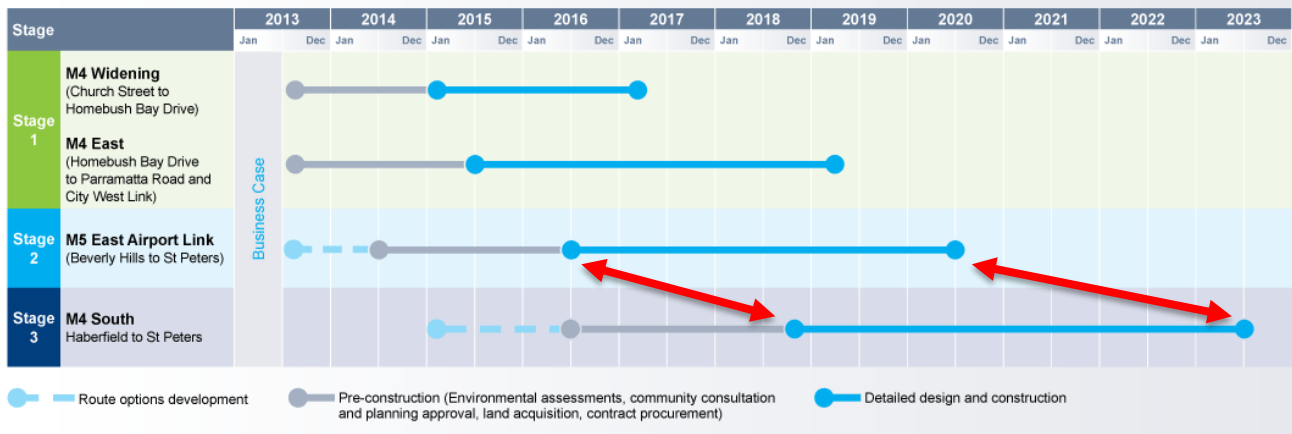
1. Any negative impact on the ability of our members and the broader business community to maintain and enhance their business
2. A process in which decisions are made without consultation with our constituents

We are hoping to avoid the necessity of taking action by being as collaborative and open as we can in the initial stages of this project. Collaboration now will assist in a smoother transition in the future.

This being said, the voice of over 2000 businesses in the Newtown precinct, most of whom are also local residents, can be a very powerful one. When combined with the support of our constituents, the voice gets louder.

Timeline of Activity

Delivery timeline



The key timeframe for our activity is the pre-construction phase. This is when the Environmental Impact Study is being developed and the guidelines of the tender process are being built. The ability to have input into the tender document is one of our strategies, but may be unrealistic.

This delivery timeline highlights our point of concern. There is a 3 year gap between the completion of the M5 East Airport Link, finishing at St Peters, and the M4 South.

We are currently seeking clarification on how this substantial increase in traffic will be managed so that we can inform our constituents and develop strategies to minimise the impact on our precinct.

Our draft timeline of activity is

1. December 2014
 - Initial meetings to gather information and questions
 - Finalise our marketing and communications plan
 - Build our network of constituents and open the lines of communication
2. January-June 2015
 - Communicate regular updates about the project to our constituents
 - Invite the Authority to member events to discuss the project with our members
 - Establish a forum where our members can ask questions and make comments
 - Advocate for the alignment of the concurrent completion of stages 2 & 3
 - Alternatively, request and advocate for traffic management solutions that minimise the impact to the Newtown Precinct during 2020-2-23
 - Request the Authority to introduce us to the proponents tendering to build stage 2

- Communicate the position of the NPBA and its constituents to the proponents of the stage 2 tender process
- Request timely updates on the tender process as it progresses

This timeline and the activity in it are fluid pending the outcomes of our discussions over the coming weeks and months.

Summary

The NPBA will do everything in its power to minimise the impact of the Westconnex project on the business community in our precinct. Any impact on our businesses will have flow on effects to the residents in the area, leading to our desire to engage with the broader Newtown community.

We are hoping to be as collaborative as possible through this whole process and look forward to the opportunity of building stronger relationships with our stakeholders and constituents.