



# INNER WEST COUNCIL

14 December 2018

Department of Planning and Environment  
GPO Box 39  
Sydney NSW 2001

Attention: Keith Ng

## **F6 Extension Stage 1 - SSI 17\_8931**

Inner West Council opposes Sydney's expanding urban motorway network and its inevitable negative impacts on generations to come. Whilst the Inner West Council area would not be directly impacted by the F6 Extension Stage 1 (the project) and Council recognises there may be benefits to other council areas, the resultant impacts of the project will nonetheless adversely affect Inner West communities and localities. Additionally, Council considers the expanding motorway network to be contrary to the State Government's vision for three metropolitan cities and instead supports a combination of solutions to address population growth including sustainable and mass transport choices and coordinated demand management, particularly with new development.

If the project goes ahead the design needs to support other forms of access, including local walking and cycling movements with improved connectivity and amenity features, and better public transport serving centres.

### **More traffic in congested streets**

The F6 Extension Stage 1 along with WestConnex and the Western Harbour Tunnel are duplicating the radial road network previously laid out in Sydney, funnelling traffic into the inner city. This is taking place despite a newly adopted planning vision which seeks to transform Greater Sydney into a metropolis of three cities with supporting centres located throughout Sydney. The Inner West Council area is a condensed high-density location which already experiences significant traffic congestion, and this project along with WestConnex Stages 1, 2 and 3 and the Western Harbour Tunnel will funnel more traffic into confined local streets and high pedestrian areas. Increased traffic forecast on the exit ramps at St Peters will impact a community already bearing the burdens of WestConnex following years of major construction.

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) cites the benefit of traffic bypassing up to 23 sets of traffic lights on the Princes Highway and it is these perceived benefits of improved convenience and reliability that result in more people choosing to drive – known as induced demand. The EIS forecasts only a slight improvement of the wider road network in 2026 and 2036 as a result of a small drop in the daily Vehicle Kilometres Travelled (VKT) and daily Vehicle Hours Travelled (VHT) on non-motorway roads with the road network accommodating more or longer trips in a shorter time. These long lasting operational consequences will adversely affect residents and businesses of the Inner West clogging local streets and intersections and raising concerns about more future road widenings as part of the RMS Network Integration Program.

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Meanwhile the EIS identifies no or negligible improvements for VKT and VHT for on-road freight for scenarios not including the F6 Extension Stage 2, and modelling of the cumulative scenario (including F6 Stage 2, Sydney Gateway, Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link) shows motorway segments would operate at only LOS D with higher potential for congestion and queuing should an incident occur.

While other major cities around the world have abandoned large-scale radial motorways, the NSW Government continues to push forward with ineffective methods to address road congestion. The RMS Traffic Volume Viewer shows traffic volumes on the Princes Highway in Banksia and Grand Parade/General Holmes Drive have remained stable over the last ten years and the same stability can be seen on other major roads including the ANZAC Bridge, Parramatta Road and Victoria Road – and yet more roadways continue to be proposed.

With Sydney's population to reach 6.4 million by 2036 – a 50 percent increase from 2011 –, the accompanying growth in travel demand needs to be accommodated without building more motorways, freeing-up existing road space for commercial traffic movements. Inner West Council supports a combination of solutions to address dispersed population growth and land use changes and influence new travel behaviours particularly for commuter and discretionary trips. In addition to mass transport in growth areas, congestion charging needs to be applied in congested centres. Genuine incentives to travel during non-peak periods need to be provided, a safe and connected regional bike network needs to be implemented and NSW government leadership is needed on travel planning for the occupants of new major development sites. The project alternatives outlined in Part 5 of the EIS only identify existing RMS programs and public transport services and fails to address the broader suite of much-needed alternatives as Sydney's population grows.

Should the project goes ahead, a portal serving Sydney Airport at General Holmes Drive should be considered to reduce the pressure and scope of Sydney Gateway and the project should to be comprehensively modelled and exhibited along with the F6 Extension Stage 2.

## Active transport

Inner West Council is concerned about the increased traffic in and around St Peters and Rozelle due to the project's link to WestConnex Stage 3 would result in an overall deterioration of conditions for walking and cycling in the longer-term. The project needs to ensure feedback about the local access needs of pedestrians cyclists are addressed including with improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and amenities such as shelter, shade and seating.

Widened intersections around the Haberfield and St Peters interchange have led to increased road crossing distances and the proposal to widen and raise President Avenue and alter the President Avenue / Princes Highway intersection with additional lanes and turning movements needs to ensure pedestrians can quickly and easily move around their local area.

Likewise changes to pedestrian and bicycle access during construction often impose significantly on people walking and cycling. Inner West Council is keen to ensure lessons have been learned and approaches taken with WestConnex are not continued including inadequate widths provided for shared walk/cycle paths, bulky poles installed on footpaths and installation of signs and electrical cabinets affecting pedestrian movements and visual amenity. Temporary access arrangements and the preparation of Construction Traffic and Access Management Plans need to take council and

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community concerns into account and ensure diversions are convenient and direct and not forcing people to walk or cycle in dangerous circumstances as they seek a shorter path.

Providing faster driving trips with an expanding motorway network should not undermine the directions in the Greater Sydney Region Plan for healthy lifestyles and connected communities. *Future Transport 2056* is underpinned by the movement and place framework while the Eastern District Plan aims to achieve great places to live and work. The EIS says the project would support the movement and place framework by changing the role of arterial roads such as Grand Parade and the Princes Highway however simultaneously says the project would allow these arterial roads to retain their purpose as movement corridors. The rollout of the Sydney strategic motorway network needs to be accompanied by a comprehensive review of road classifications, categorisations and funding to support place-based planning on surface roads serving Local Centres. Access to centres needs to be improved by removing through traffic and supporting local access primarily by walking and cycling and the Sydney Regional Bike Network now in development by Transport for NSW needs to be implemented immediately with funding and leadership from the State Government.

## Community health impacts

The expanding urban motorway network and the F6 Extension will impose known health impacts both cumulatively and locally. Studies worldwide indicate that urban motorways contribute to private car dependency resulting in sedentary living in addition to reduced air quality, increased traffic noise and the psychological distress created by property acquisitions and changes in property values.

This project represents the first stage of a larger project leaving communities uncertain about future project iterations and impacts as the project expands and changes. The proposal for incremental motorway stages stretching across Sydney does not provide the certainty needed by Local Government as we prepare Local Strategic Planning Statements and the entire F6 Extension should be modelled and exhibited simultaneously demonstrating the locations of all facilities, traffic impacts and smog affected areas.

The EIS acknowledges additional induced daily trips throughout the Sydney metropolitan area as a result of the project and with more vehicles will come more emissions. Council accepts that per-vehicle emissions have declined in recent years due to technological advances but remains concerned that additional traffic generated by the project and the motorway network will negate these technological-improvements. The EIS states filtration of the project would result in no material change in air quality, saying predicted changes in the concentration of pollutants would be driven by traffic changes on surface roads. The directions in the Eastern City District Plan include reduced transport-related gas emissions and to ensure the cited improvements in air quality are achieved, accompanying measures are needed including a major review of existing road classifications, categorisations and funding, implementation of safe and connected bicycle network throughout Sydney and assessment of the cumulative changes to air quality resulting from all of the current and likely future motorway projects proposed for Sydney.

## Local impacts and urban design

The impact of motorways and the associated operational infrastructure imposes enormously on local neighbourhoods, and motorway projects now under construction provide opportunities to achieve better outcomes.

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With different stages of WestConnex, Inner West Council has seen disappointing outcomes as a result of the following:

- The M4-M5 Link Concept Design was strongly premised on new open space at Rozelle but the application subsequently proposed motorway support facilities which significantly restricted its use and attractiveness
- The introduction of a flyover in Rozelle as a result of project iterations has resulted in the loss of shared path bridge originally proposed to connect local communities
- Recreational areas proposed in Rozelle and St Peters and comprehensively consulted with the community may not be fully delivered due to budget limitations
- Residual land and roadside spaces which are bleak unusable spaces and impose an immediate financial burden for council maintenance.

Local benefits such as useable open space and connections between neighbourhoods are important features of these major projects and they need to be honoured and delivered. Projects need to be fully developed and costed to maintain community trust and ensure the delivery of all exhibited components. Project iterations should not involve significant changes that undermine the exhibited concept or remove local benefits, and improved planning and commitment is needed to ensure residual lands and roadside spaces can be used constructively either by the local community or in the provision of other benefits in future. The handover of land to local government needs to be accompanied by maintenance funding in the initial period following handover.

In addition, the proponent needs to consider alternative approaches to the RMS standards when similar practical outcomes can be achieved, Inner West Council sought exemption from the RMS standards for variable message signs to minimise visual impacts and ensure walk/cycle paths were not obstructed however, compliance with the standards was insisted upon. Council appreciates the convenience of standards in providing certainty for the proponent however consideration needs to be given to alternative mechanisms in response to community concerns.

The President Avenue construction facility would require the provision of temporary sporting and recreational facilities including a skate park, children's playground and sporting fields, with investigations to take place during detailed design. The Inner West Council area has limited sporting and recreation facilities including a high demand for use and the impact of additional demand on parks and open space in the south-western corner of the council area needs to be assessed in collaboration with Inner West Council.

If you would like to speak with an officer about Council's submission on the project you can contact Brigid Kelly, Senior Transport Planner on telephone 9392 5204 or [brigid.kelly@innerwest.nsw.gov.au](mailto:brigid.kelly@innerwest.nsw.gov.au)

Yours sincerely



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