

Application Number SSI 7485**WestConnex M4-M5 Link – Modification 2 The Crescent overpass**

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The application for a “modification” should be viewed as a new proposal. The original concept was below ground and this concept is substantially different. It brings disruption to existing and well used pedestrian paths and adds another unwelcome visual blight to our neighbourhood due to Westconnex construction. I strongly oppose this proposal.

At a recent community information session, the new pedestrian access to Bicentennial Park from Johnston St was explained. It will be changed from the current frequently used route of one set of traffic lights to a manoeuvre involving four crossings. That is not improving access to public green space from a dense residential precinct or improving “liveability” in our city. It is not child or dog friendly and acts as a barrier to the waterfront, park and foreshore walk.

Trees have already been removed from Buruwan Park. It seems that the EIS approved that work but the landscape could be revegetated and made less severe by using an underpass – as previously planned. The promise of a green link is fast evaporating with the proposed cement two lane overpass. This above ground road expansion will act as a physical barrier for pedestrians and cyclists. It will be an enduring visual barrier.

As a barrier, this proposal also impacts on public transport options. The Light Rail stop at Rozelle Bay will be isolated. Rather than promoting public transport use and planning for future integration with the ferry network, this roadway will deter users.

As a long term local resident, it gives me great sorrow to note that the mural along the wall at The Crescent will be obscured by this plan. That mural represents issues faced by our community and is an important statement about our social heritage.

This modification is opposed by local residents on valid grounds. The option of a below ground connection would have far less impact on the local environment in perpetuity. Consider the ongoing debate about the Cahill expressway. It is a visual barrier that should act as a precedent, not to be repeated. Every attempt should be made to improve connections for pedestrians and cyclists. The current work is creating a wasteland for up to four years – there should not be an everlasting visual and physical barrier as a reminder of this time.