

Director, Major Project Assessments

Department of Planning

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Submission: WestConnex M4 east EIS (SSI 6307)

I wish to express my strong objection to the West Connex M4 East motorway proposal. If built, it will generate additional traffic, funnelling it into already heavily congested middle-ring and inner city roads. This will require the demolition of hundreds of homes and businesses to make way for a road widening on the surface road network to distribute the traffic from the motorway.

I also wish to register my strong objection to the government awarding tenders for the project before a full business case has been publicly released and before the EIS had been published and the public has exercised its right of participation.

The EIS process is supposed to allow for genuine public input and to result, potentially, in approval, non-approval, or approval with modifications, of the project. The present procedure makes a mockery of that right. Only allowing 45 days to read a dense and complex set of documents, totalling nearly 4000 pages, indicates a lack of willingness to allow the public to scrutinise the documents closely. In addition, as highlighted by the Ashfield Council it was revealed that there were omissions, leading to the EIS being resubmitted to the public, with a minimal extension to review. Further suggesting the EIS process has been rushed, to avoid transparency.

Government funding for this proposal – as part of the whole WestConnex proposal – will claim an extraordinary proportion of the state transport budget for years to come. This being the case, I am outraged that the EIS has failed to honestly and fully discuss its social, environmental, and economic impacts or to explain why it is preferable to other, alternative public and active transport solutions.

In particular, I draw attention to the EIS's failure to:

- Factor into the traffic modelling the very large increase in apartment construction – and therefore of population – that has been promoted by the WestConnex Delivery Authority and other agencies as a major rationalisation for the proposal
- Honestly and genuinely discuss public transport and freight rail alternatives
- Publish a robust business case to justify expenditure of billions of dollars' worth of taxpayers funds
- Properly describe the long term impacts of air pollution generated by the increased traffic volumes the project is designed to facilitate
- Consider more substantial public and active transport options that will produce a lower level of greenhouse gas emissions

Decades-long global experience of urban motorway construction has demonstrated conclusively that big new urban roads are counterproductive. They generate a flood of new road traffic and rapidly

reach capacity. That is why, globally, they have fallen out of favour and are no longer seen as a solution to congestion.