

## M4EIS Submission: Heritage losses, principally in Historic Haberfield

Along with The National Trust, I object to the destruction of so much heritage in order to build a tollway which ends in traffic jams. I do not believe that the obviously flawed WestConnx project, which has not followed due process in relation to appropriate Gateway Reviews and has not answered the manifest objections identified in the NSW Auditor General's report (2014), can possibly justify the destruction of 53 properties, most of which are heritage items. The NSW Auditor General's report warned that due to the fact that it has not been open to continuous review there is a significant risk that this major infrastructure project could fail. Continuous review would have identified inherent risks or problems.

Even were the project a worthy one, sensitively providing mass transit solutions for a growing population, I would have concerns about so much destruction of character and heritage. However, the proposed series of tollways will not answer Sydney's transport problems and the tragic loss of these houses and environments cannot be tolerated.

Haberfield is the oldest and most intact and protected planned garden suburb in the world. Built in 1901, it exemplifies the Federation era: the birth of contemporary Australia. The garden suburb 'is outstanding for its collection of modest Federation houses displaying skilful use of materials and a high standard of workmanship of innovative design and detail particularly reflective of the burgeoning naturalistic spirit of the Federation year in which they were built.'

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Another example of a garden suburb, opened in Germany in 1920, is considered a national icon, drawing visitors from around Germany and the world to experience and study the uniqueness of the place and its architecture. It is fully protected.

Yet here in Sydney, the EIS outlines plans for WestConnex tolled roads and tunnels to plough right through this unique suburb, removing not just 53 properties, but iconic street trees and gardens. It is clear from the plans that only a few hundred yards from this tragic destruction, the traffic would grind to a halt as it jams from 8 lanes to two eastbound lanes on Dobroyd Parade/City West Link.

The EIS repeatedly documents that the demolition of a wide variety of heritage houses, apartment blocks and buildings, some along Parramatta Rd, would have 'major adverse impact(s)'. The EIS describes the effect on the Haberfield Heritage Conservation Area as 'significant and unable to be effectively mitigated.' vii

Is if this were not bad enough, many more 'heritage items, potential heritage items and HCAs above the proposed tunnels and in the vicinity of construction works may be subject to vibration impacts', possibly compromising 'a heritage item's structural integrity.' vii

Instead of beautiful and historic houses and vegetation, Haberfield will be blighted with an 8-line highway, and 'the visual impacts of new motorway infrastructure,

including' the unfiltered smoke stacks ('ventilation facility'), 'motorway facilities and noise walls.' vi

According to Ashfield Council's submission to the EIS: 'The nature and impact of the major ventilation facility emerges in dribs and drabs. Located upslope of the Bunnings (former Peak Frean's building), at 25 metres high the ventilation facility will be taller than the existing heritage-listed tower, and in its suggested form and bulk, vastly more assertive. It will resemble an isolated, peculiar apartment building. The facility will not only be seen from Walker Avenue living rooms and gardens, it will be visible from a considerable area of the surrounding heritage listed streets of Haberfield.' (p. 11)

I echo their conclusion: 'That the major visual impacts, and utterly dramatic and dominating juxtaposition of the proposed Eastern Ventilation facility upon Haberfield can be thought capable of acceptable remedy through references to broad design principles (concluded to have been already met in the design materials offered) - is extremely disappointing. It is not acceptable.' (p. 12)

Typical of the seemingly rushed nature of this EIS is discussion of the frontage to the State heritage listed "Yasmar" - a key historic component of the area tangibly linking the suburb to its earliest settling family the Ramsays. The EIS reports that it is to be impacted in a minimal, but really unspecified manner. What does this mean? What would it look like? Does this leave it open for the contractors to decide what to do when they are on site?

I oppose development that

- \* *impacts upon, or degrades the values of adjoining, Heritage Conservation Areas*
- \* *involves the demolition of Listed Heritage Items*
- \* *involves the demolition of places which have been removed from Heritage Lists on non heritage-based grounds*
- \* *involves the demolition of places which are of indisputable heritage significance, but which have been denied statutory heritage recognition.*

Along with the National Trust I object to the massive expenditure on tollways, which diverts much needed investment away from public transport, capable of moving large numbers of people more effectively and with much less adverse heritage impact.

Like the National Trust, I believe that the provisions of public/private partnership agreements for urban motorways should be made public and that such agreements must not contain penalty provisions for compensation payments to a motorway operator if a public transport system competes effectively with the motorway.

I request that I receive a proper response to my critical analysis of destruction of heritage areas as described in the EIS of the proposed WestConnex project.