

Secretary,
Department of Planning,
NSW Department of Planning and Environment.
1 November 2015

Re: SSI 6307

I write to submit in relation to the Environmental Impact Statement for the WestConnex M4 East project. I am opposed to both the M4 East project and all other proposed stages of WestConnex. I request a response to my concerns outlined in this submission.

I live near Ashfield Park in Haberfield and will be subjected to years of construction impacts, including truck movements, traffic congestion in local streets due to road closures and detours. If the WestConnex M4 East is completed, I will be living near a portal and exhaust stack, with associated pollution.

This project is fundamentally flawed and will not solve traffic congestion. Decades of global experience in motorway construction has demonstrated conclusively that big urban roads are counter-productive. They generate a flood of new traffic and rapidly reach capacity.

Neither the WDA nor the government has provided any evidence from Australia or overseas that building motorways reduces traffic congestion in the medium-term.

There has been no proper consideration of improved and integrated public transport as an alternative to WestConnex.

I object to the lodging of the EIS before a full business case has made public. I also object to billions of dollars of public money being locked into contracts before the social/environmental review is complete and before the relevant authorities consider whether planning approval should be granted. Given key elements of the project have been locked in and the project is a *fait accompli*, the consultation process around the EIS appears to be a farce that was never truly designed to allow meaningful public participation.

I object to the government's failure to respond to the NSW Auditor-General's criticisms of the WestConnex Project.

I object to hundreds of people being forced from their homes and businesses through the compulsory acquisition of over 290 properties. Many affected property owners report that the prices offered by government are grossly undervalued, and property values of houses in close proximity to the proposed interchange in Haberfield have dropped. I have personally witnessed the major psychological impact of compulsory acquisition on those affected and the impact on those living in close proximity to the planned tollway.

I object to the wholesale destruction of heritage properties in Ashfield and Haberfield, especially as the latter is a conservation area of national and international significance.

I object to the impact the years of 24-hour construction work (tunnelling and truck movements) will have on communities. The EIS states that noise and vibration impacts will “cause stress and anxiety, affect the enjoyment of outdoor spaces and disturb normal indoor activities ... [and] sleep patterns with consequent impacts on health and wellbeing.”

I object to the lack of information or consideration within the EIS of the likely cumulative health and social impacts upon people who not only live within the project area, but who may both work, live and study within the current project area. It should be noted that some people living in the area impacted by the M4 East may work or study in areas subject to subsequent stages of WestConnex. The health and social impacts upon these groups of people will be significantly greater than on others who spend less time within the project area.

I object that the project boundary and areas identified as affected is only 50 metres from the indicative route. The impact of this major road project will go far wider than 50 metres. By restricting the footprint of the project's impact to just 50 meters along the indicative route, the true number of properties and people adversely impacted is hidden, and the true costs of mitigation avoided.

I object that much of the mitigating costs of the impacts of this project are to be borne by individual residents or businesses and not by the proponents.

There is reference in the EIS re noise and vibration impacts (page 85, Section 6.5.1, Volume 2E) indicating that the Noise and Vibration Assessment has found that *‘much of the project area is already exposed to high noise levels from existing traffic with many properties already exceeding noise limits. As a result, the Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment has identified 310 properties that may be eligible for treatments to mitigate primarily existing noise impacts.’* I object that these 310 specific properties and locations have not been identified within the EIS to allow residents to know whether their homes or business are to be offered mitigation for these impacts.

I object to the loss of open space available for passive recreation and enjoyment across all stages of WestConnex. This includes the loss of green space and trees from the Reg Coady reserve. There is too little green space available for passive and active enjoyment in the densely populated inner west. As our urban environment is further built up and becomes increasingly populated, there is an increasing need for green space available for passive enjoyment, not less. I object to the loss of habitat for local wildlife.

It is critical that the government honours its commitment that both Ashfield Park and Yasmar will be untouched by WestConnex.

I object to the increase in pollution that will result from induced traffic generated by the M4 East tunnel and the lack of filtration of the tunnel and ventilation stacks. Traffic pollution has been linked to higher incidence of respiratory and heart disease and lung cancer, as well as impaired lung development in children. This is completely unacceptable given the high numbers of residents, businesses, schools, and child and aged care facilities in the area

I object to the omission in the traffic modelling of the traffic impacts that will be generated by the 40,000 new apartments in high-rise planned for Parramatta Rd and surrounds by Urban Growth NSW.

I object to the fact that an overall EIS has not been produced that includes all stages of the project.

I object to the tokenistic consultation processes undertaken by what is now the Sydney Motorway Corporation, included the limited time provided to respond to the EIS.

I object to the government's ongoing attempts to limit public scrutiny of this project and attempts to shut down meaningful public debate.

Funding is not available for stage three of the project. It is likely that this stage of the project will not be built. Billions of dollars will have been spent to move traffic a few kilometres from Strathfield to Haberfield - a tunnel to a traffic jam.

Words cannot express how angry I am that this project is being progressed. \$15 billion is being spent on a project that will not solve traffic congestion, funding which is needed for health, welfare, public transport and education.

Jo Alley

Ashfield