

## TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I make the following submission to the Environmental Impact Statement (**EIS**) exhibition for the Westconnex M4 East Tunnel Project (**Project**) (SSI 6307):

I am opposed to the construction of the M4 East Tunnel and do not believe that spending \$15.4 billion to achieve a 6 minute travel time saving is justified. I am troubled that the Government has ignored the community by signing contracts to build this road before releasing this EIS, the full business case, or obtaining planning approval. I believe that the 'consultation' with community has primarily been done in a way that disempowers the community from feeling like they can influence the outcome.

Without seeing the business case the community has no way of knowing what other alternatives were considered and what their associated costs were. I believe that if \$15.4 billion was spent instead on a range of public transport options then the Project would be unnecessary.

The Project will have a devastating impact on the Inner West. I am particularly concerned about the impact it will have on the communities of Ashfield and Haberfield. Ashfield is one of the most densely populated communities in Sydney and Haberfield has great historical significance. This Project will irreversibly destroy the heritage values of Haberfield and will literally carve two giant holes through the middle of our community.

If the project is to go ahead, I want the following addressed in the EIS:

### **1. Do not start work until approval and funding for the entire Westconnex project (M4 to M5) is ready**

- The EIS shows minimal improvements to traffic time from Homebush to the city/airport on the basis of this stage of the overall Westconnex project. Most of the anticipated improvements depend on the next stage of the project (tunnel from Haberfield to St Peters). Therefore work on this stage should be dependent on approval being given and funding being acquired for the next stage. If the next stage either fails to get approval or funding, even the EIS says there will be minimal improvement. I object to spending \$15 billion on minimal improvement.
- I believe the impact will be worse than 'minimal improvement'. In terms of traffic alone, traffic modelling shows there will be disastrous effects on the traffic flows on Parramatta Rd and City West Links, the roads that feed into them, and the roads they feed into, for decades to come.
- Further, if the next stage is altered in a material way it may result in additional cost and unnecessary impact on the area.

### **2. Release the full business case for the Project**

- The EIS says there are no feasible strategic transport alternatives but only 4 other alternatives provided. There is no suggestion of what other alternatives might have been considered or their associated costs.
- The justification for the Project is to get trucks off local roads and into the tunnel. It is not clear that trucks will in fact use the tunnel. Previous modelling for other tunnels in Sydney has grossly over predicted the use of the tunnels.
- The ability to develop taller buildings on, and therefore develop more intensely, Parramatta Rd should not be relevant to the project or its geography but is included as an 'advantage' (and corresponding 'disadvantage') in the EIS.

- The EIS does not consider a public transport lane within the tunnel (eg fast train).

### **3. Heritage**

- I am unable to build a second story on my house because I live in a heritage area, however, this Project will destroy heritage houses and items of historical significance. It will irreparably damage this historic area and sever the community with a motorway. The EIS accepts this permanent loss of this history. I object to this Project taking precedence over heritage and destroying heritage in this way.

### **4. Pollution: Reduction and monitoring**

- Filter the smoke stack and relocate it away from schools, childcare centres, and retirement homes.
- Increase the height of the stack to reduce the impact of emissions on the local area and increase the likelihood that emissions will be dispersed more widely.
- Monitor emissions at Haberfield Public School and Dobryod Public School, before, during and after the project.
- There needs to be monitoring not just of the stack emissions but also the emission levels outside the portals on:
  - Parramatta Road outside the portal.
  - Parramatta Road between Liverpool St and Tebbutt St where Parramatta Rd reduces to two lanes.
  - City West Link at Timbrell Drive/Mortley Ave.
- The modelling on pollution around the stack assumes improvements in vehicle emissions due to improvements in new car technology. However, the bulk of the emissions are also recognised to come from trucks (which are not expected to improve at the same rate). Also, there is no parallel modelling of emission levels if public transport options are put in place instead to get a proper comparison – this should be done.

### **5. The transport modelling is flawed**

- It is based on the expectation that public transport and active transport (cycling/walking) will improve but the Project does not fund or include any work in this regard.
- The modelling does not include provision for the development recently announced for Parramatta Road.
- The modelling does not address the problems that have occurred on similar projects where the use of the tunnel has not been what was projected, possibly due to the cost of the tolls.
- The EIS accepts that traffic on some sections of Parramatta Road and local feeder roads will be higher than if Westconnex is not built. This is unacceptable for a \$15 billion dollar project that will deliver cars and trucks into a traffic jam at the end of the tunnel.
- Many leading academics agree that building new roads just creates more traffic, thus filling the new roads to capacity and slowing traffic to pre-development levels.

## **6. Rat runs**

- Take base-level data on traffic volumes on the following Haberfield streets:
  - Dalhousie (between Parramatta Rd and Ramsay St), Rogers, Chandos, Bland, Alt, Walker, Ramsay (before and after the Haberfield shopping area, and also between Marion and Sloane Streets).
  - On Denman Ave outside Haberfield Public School.
  - On Dalhousie St outside St Joan of Arc Catholic School.
  - If the Waratah St right turn remains, then also on Waratah St outside Dobroyd Point Public School.
- Take base-level data on traffic volumes on the following Ashfield streets:
  - Church, Frederick, Elizabeth
- Monitor the above streets in Haberfield and Ashfield during construction and for a period of at least 12 months after construction.
- If any streets exceed acceptable increases, require steps to be taken to return the streets to acceptable levels (eg closing roads, speed bumps, supervised crossings).

## **7. Access**

- Remove the right turn into Waratah St Haberfield. A right turn into Waratah will encourage rat runs through Haberfield and filter traffic past a primary school and through quiet local roads.
- Find a way for the residents of Martin St East and Wattle St (between Ramsay and Martin Streets) to access the local community (possibly by opening the end of Martin St East onto Ramsay St for exiting traffic).
- Consider whether any additional right turn access is required into Dalhousie St from Parramatta Rd for west-bound traffic along Parramatta Rd.

## **8. Noise**

- Build noise-walls for properties in Ashfield and Haberfield next to the Parramatta Rd and City West Link interchanges, during and after construction.
- Set up a noise monitoring station at Haberfield Public School and Dobroyd Point Public School and require preventative measures (eg double glazing, air circulation measures) to be taken if the noise varies above an acceptable level.

## **9. Local parking**

- The parking allowed for on the construction sites for the contractors does not provide parking for all contractors and there will be a significant number of additional vehicles parking on local roads. The Project should be required to monitor parking issues along the area of construction, particularly outside Haberfield Public School and Dobroyd Public School. There should be a phone number, monitored 24 hours, for local residents to call in the event that they experience parking problems.

- Contractors should be required to show evidence on their vehicle that they are working on the Project so that residents can require the vehicle to be moved if needed for resident parking.

#### **10. Include public transport development including:**

- A designated bus lane or light rail lane along Parramatta Rd from Concord to Haberfield, to be extended to the city if the next stage goes ahead.
- Express bus service from Haberfield to the city.
- Consideration of a concurrent tunnel for a fast train connection from Strathfield, ultimately to the city.

#### **11. Maintain connection between Haberfield and Ashfield and Five Dock**

- The Project will devastatingly obstruct connection between Haberfield and its local communities in Five Dock (and the Five Dock side of Haberfield, west of the Wattle St tunnel exit) and Ashfield.
- The project needs to improve the proposals for connectivity between Haberfield and Ashfield across Parramatta Road. Specifically:
  - There should be a pedestrian and cycle bridge across Parramatta Road to link Ashfield Park to Haberfield (probably at Dalhousie St, and potentially in front of McDonalds). Many children from Ashfield attend school and day care in Haberfield and the majority of them walk, some alone. There needs to be a safer crossing for them than what is proposed (do nothing). This intersection is the first lights after the tunnel. A bridge would decrease the need for a pedestrian crossing at Dalhousie St which would be a major congestion point on that part of Parramatta Road.
  - A further pedestrian bridge should be considered further along Parramatta Rd to remove the need for pedestrian crossings at Liverpool Rd and Sloane St which will similarly congest traffic.
  - The pedestrian bridge at Bland St should include cycle/stroller access. Given that the bridge needs to be altered anyway, this is a perfect opportunity to improve it. The current lift access does not allow for cycling. Further, when it is out of order, families with strollers and cyclists have to carry prams and bikes up the stairs. If the stated aim of the project is to improve active transport, this change should be self-evident.
- Many children from Five Dock attend school and day care in Haberfield. There should be improved connectivity between Haberfield and Five Dock across Wattle St to enable children to safely cross, including:
  - A pedestrian and cycle bridge across Wattle St/City West Link at Waratah St linking Haberfield to Timbrell Park
  - Consideration of a pedestrian (and potentially cycle) bridge across Wattle St at Ramsey St given the width of the proposed Ramsey St/Wattle St intersection (3 stage crossing).

#### **12. Invest in the local community**

- Return acquired properties not required after construction to Ashfield Council for community use and public open space. Do not sell off these areas for development (and therefore capitalise on the loss to the original homeowners).
- Set a specific quota for new trees and other planting in the community, particularly on the most affected areas (Parramatta Road at and beyond the tunnel exit, Walker Ave around the stack and other tunnel buildings, City West link at and beyond the tunnel exit). While the 'artist impressions' of these areas show a lot of trees and green space I am not optimistic that this will be provided unless specifically required.
- Provide a fund for the Ashfield and Haberfield community (perhaps through Council) to address the unexpected consequences of this road.
- Set specific objectives for employment of locals.

### **13. Improve 'Active transport' options (for cyclists, pedestrians)**

- There should be pedestrian/cycle bridges over Parramatta Rd as outlined above.
- There should be improved connectivity across Wattle St as outlined above.

### **14. Properly compensate home owners facing compulsory acquisition and those nearby**

- Homeowners say that the amounts being offered by Westconnex do not allow them to move into comparable housing in the area. They are reporting heavy handed tactics and low ball offers. It is shocking that these people are subsidising the project as well as being forced out of their homes. Proper monitoring should be taking place to ensure that dispossessed homeowners receive generous compensation so that, although they have to move, they are not otherwise disadvantaged.
- Proper compensation should be provided to people whose homes are not required but live near the works. Offer voluntary acquisitions and WDA-funded dilapidation reports for those properties near construction sites in Northcote, Wolseley, Wattle, Walker, Ramsay, Chandos, and Loftus Streets.

This project will not solve Sydney's traffic problems. NSW taxpayer's money is better spent investing in Public Transport. Please consider my concerns and address them in your response to the community's submissions to the EIS.

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Political Donation Declaration: I have not made any donations exceeding \$1000 in the requisite period.