

## **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 WestConnex development in its current form. This is not an efficient use of \$15.4 billion of taxpayers' funds, because I do not believe it will lead to the congestion improvements promoted by the State Government and the WestConnex Delivery Authority (now Sydney Motorway Corporation). I am very concerned that the State Government has ignored the community by signing contracts to build this road before releasing this EIS, the full business case, or obtaining planning approval – this is a reprehensible lack of transparency and proper procedure. Without seeing the business case I and the community have no way of knowing what other alternatives were considered and what the associated costs were.

The Project will have a devastating impact on the Inner West and particularly on our communities of Ashfield and Haberfield. Ashfield is one of the most densely populated communities in Sydney and Haberfield has great historical significance, therefore the decision to proceed is all the more bewildering. I have attended several community events and recently one parent said at a WestConnex information night held at Haberfield Public School, "we feel Haberfield Public School is at the centre of a 'toxic triangle' of pollution stack and portals under the current WestConnex plans." On top of that, there will be four construction zones within several hundred metres of the school my children attend and these sites will be operating for at least three years. We live on the Ashfield side of Parramatta road from which we walk, ride bikes and drive to our school. As you are no doubt aware Haberfield Public School draws more than 60 per cent of its students from the Ashfield side of Parramatta Road and the Five Dock side of Wattle St – turning both roads into 10-lane motorways will literally carve two giant holes through the middle of our community.

I also do not believe that the community concerns about WestConnex have been adequately conveyed in the EIS. While it acknowledges that the community have concerns about the Project and have requested mitigation measures, it does not convey satisfactorily the breadth of the issues that have been raised in meetings with WestConnex representatives. Below I have outlined my concerns for my children's health and safety and the impact on our community, plus made suggestions to address them.

## **AIR QUALITY**

At the information night at our school attended by WestConnex representatives, we were told the proposed location for the eastern ventilation stack is "optimum". It feels far from optimum. I am not satisfied by the EIS's suggestion that the increase in emissions will be negligible, and I am concerned that my children's health will suffer from vehicle emissions from tens of thousands of cars being dispersed near the school and our home from the pollution stack opposite the Bunnings site. I request the following action:

- Install an air quality monitoring station at Haberfield Public School and Hammond Park well before the M4 East tunnel begins operation to take baseline measurements of pollution, including PM2.5.
- Leave the monitoring stations operating after the M4 East tunnel opens to monitor emissions at the school and park. We request this data be provided to the community and

school and that action is taken immediately if there is a measurable impact or increase in pollution levels.

- Filter the ventilation stack. If you can spend \$15.4 billion on a road to reduce travel times by just six minutes, you can afford to spend the additional money required to ensure the vast majority of pollution is not released into this densely-populated neighbourhood.
- Consider relocating the stack to a topographically higher point further west along Parramatta Road where emissions will be released higher into the atmosphere. The stack should be away from schools, childcare centres and retirement homes so the most vulnerable members of the community are not exposed to increased levels of pollution.
- Increase the height of the ventilation stack to reduce the impact of emissions on the local area and increase the likelihood that emissions will be dispersed more widely.

#### **NOISE AND DUST:**

I am very concerned that my children's learning and play at school will be disrupted by noise generated during construction by heavy machinery and vehicles operating close to Haberfield Public School. I note that the school site (NCA19 in the Noise and Vibration report) is expected to have "high worst-case NML exceedances during the daytime" from construction and demolition work. I request the following action:

- Conduct a noise assessment at Haberfield Public School before construction begins and execute noise mitigation measures. This may take the form of double glazing of windows (and consequent installation of air conditioning) in classrooms. These mitigation measures must take place before construction begins. I also request compensation is provided to Haberfield Public School for the additional electricity costs associated with running the air conditioning because windows cannot be opened.
- Set up a noise monitoring station at Haberfield Public School and Hammond Park so levels are monitored during construction. This data must be made available frequently to the school and the local community.
- Amend work schedules as required so that students' learning and play is not affected by noise. This may include regular consultation with the school to ensure noise is reduced during, for instance, exams, music rehearsals, school assemblies and lunch/recess when students are outside.
- Immediately reduce noise at the construction sites if the school principal, senior staff and/or local Ashfield counsellors contact authorities to complain of disruption to students, teachers and community.
- Ensure dust generated by construction activities and vehicle movements is limited and respond immediately by ceasing construction if notified that children playing outside at school are affected by dust in the air.

#### **TRAFFIC – DURING CONSTRUCTION AND WHEN TUNNELS ARE OPERATING**

I am greatly concerned that my children's safety will be put at risk by changed traffic behaviours as a result of WestConnex during construction and when the tunnels open. For instance, I understand the pedestrian overpass at the corner of Bland St and Parramatta Rd will close for a period during construction – this is used by me and my children to get safely to and from our school. I note also that the Brescia property at that intersection will be a major construction site, with heavy vehicles departing the site on to Bland St – a narrow and congested road at the best of times. Hundreds of heavy vehicles will use this and other intersections used by our students: for instance, the EIS reports that 80 trucks will use the Wattle St/Parramatta Rd intersection between 7.30am and 8.30am alone. Rat-running in local streets is likely to increase as drivers avoid using the tollways. On

top of all this, many of the local intersections are expected to remain at Level F following construction, which is another outcome that leads us to question the efficiency of the whole WestConnex project. Additionally an increase in cars in the area from construction workers will strain the already tight street parking.

I request the following action:

#### Before construction begins

- Take base-level data on traffic volumes on the following Haberfield streets:
  - Dalhousie (between Parramatta Rd and Ramsay St), Rogers, Chandos, Bland, Alt, Walker, and Ramsay (before and after the Haberfield shopping area, and also between Marion and Sloane Streets).
  - On Denman Ave outside Haberfield Public School.
- Take base-level data on traffic volumes on the following Ashfield streets:
  - Church, Frederick, Elizabeth, Alt, Julia and Bland Streets
- 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, take steps to return the streets to acceptable levels (eg blocking access, speed bumps) and consider pedestrian safety measures (eg crossing, bridges).

#### During construction

- For the whole period of the closure of the southern footpath on Parramatta Rd between Chandos and Bland Sts, have lollipop people in attendance at the Dalhousie St/Ashfield Park traffic lights to ensure those children who walk to school alone are guided across Parramatta Rd safely. The lollipop people must be present at these lights for both the morning & afternoon 'school zone' times.
- For the whole period that the Bland St overpass is unable to be used, have lollipop people be present at the Parramatta Rd/Bland St traffic lights (both to cross Bland from the east and to cross Parramatta Rd) for the morning & afternoon 'school zone' times.
- Install traffic lights at the corner of Alt St and Parramatta Road for at least the construction phase, to provide a crossing away from Bland St where there will be heavy truck movements. This may also require the installation of traffic lights at Church St/Alt St, as that intersection is already busy and difficult to negotiate because of poor sightlines.
- That any truck movements made during morning & afternoon school zone times are made under the supervision of a 'spotter' (i.e. a person on the ground whose job it is to be the driver's 'eyes & ears' as visibility from a high cab is often poor), who ensures the safe passage of the children on the footpaths of and when crossing Bland St, Wattle St and Parramatta Rd.
- Declare a quarantine zone at an agreed distance around the school to ensure construction staff's parked vehicles do not restrict parking for parents in the streets near the school during pick-up and drop-off times.

### **PEDESTRIAN/CYCLIST INITIATIVES**

One of the stated priorities of this project is to "Create opportunities for urban revitalisation, improved liveability, and public and active transport (walking and cycling) improvements along and around Parramatta Road". After reading the EIS and hearing the WestConnex representatives at our school's information night, I see no evidence of such improvements in our community. Indeed, when

raised at our meeting, your representatives seemed surprised that we would request such improvements! It is a massive missed opportunity not to leave us with better connections for active transport between Haberfield, Ashfield and Five Dock after dividing us even further with massive roads and tunnels.

I request the following action:

- Install additional pedestrian/cyclist crossings between Haberfield and Ashfield as a permanent positive legacy of the Project. We would love to see these be innovative in design – an overpass nearer to Ashfield Park/Orpington St, for instance, that is exciting to look at as well as useful for our community. The Alt St crossing suggested above could also remain. For reference, we look at Parramatta Road in Camperdown where there are many crossings at intersections that are phased well and do not impede traffic, while allowing locals to cross easily and safely.
- Similarly, additional crossings should be installed over Wattle St/City West Link, ie at Waratah St linking to Timbrell Park and/or at Ramsay St.
- The existing Bland St overpass could be improved in design. While we appreciate the lifts, they regularly break down forcing cyclists, parents with prams and children with scooters to navigate the steps. Consider building ramps to access the overpass.
- Work with the existing cycleways and make improvements so cycle commuters can safely cross Parramatta Road and meet up with the Bay Run through Haberfield – avoiding associated risks of construction and diverted traffic.
- As I expect there to be some unanticipated and unintended risks/consequences during the constructions period and surrounding roads. I want the the local community to be allowed to conduct pedestrian and cyclist safety risk assessments (inclusive of control measures) of the construction area around the Haberfield Public School precinct. These assessments can then be presented to Westconnex (Sydney Motorway Corporation) and mitigation activities be actioned within 6 weeks of the control measures being suggested.
- Allow local community to review safety risk assessments and control measures for construction area, pedestrian traffic and cycleways for user of the Haberfield Public School – inclusive of parking areas and surrounding roads.

## **SOCIAL IMPACT**

This Project is already having a significant and direct social impact on our school community. Many families have been forced to leave their homes, and some of them will be unable to remain at the school because the compensation they receive does not allow them to rent or buy in the neighbourhood in future. This is devastating for them, and the children and adults who have become their friends through school. Many heritage homes and buildings will be demolished, to be replaced by an ugly and enormous ventilation stack and widened roads. These will be a constant reminder of the loss of community wrought by this Project. I do not feel the EIS adequately acknowledges or compensates us for this impact.

I request the following action:

- Provide a fund for the Ashfield and Haberfield community (perhaps through Ashfield Council) to fund positive community initiatives for the next 10 years.
- Provide a fund for Haberfield Public School to address the unexpected consequences of the construction and the subsequent road.
- Ensure all land used or disturbed during construction be returned back to the community and not to developers. This land is to be used for community projects. Westconnex (Sydney

Motorway corporation) to fund the repatriation of the land safe for children and/or families to use.

- 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).

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

- I request and expect that the Haberfield P&C and/or Haberfield Public School Principal will hold a seat on the community consultative committee that will be established as part of this Project.
- I note the lack of materials produced in languages other than English as part of the 'community consultation' – we have a large Mandarin-speaking community who were unable to read the EIS because it was not provided in other languages. In a multicultural city such as Sydney, this is extremely poor and discriminatory practice.
- I protest that the EIS submission period was too short to allow all parties to read the 5000-page EIS and consult adequately. Further, I believe the EIS was structured in a way that made it extremely difficult to navigate and understand.
- To suggest within the EIS that alternatives were considered and for a Business Case not be presented to the community is disgusting. Release the business case.
- I am confused at the statement in your project objectives "cater for the diverse travel demands that are best met by road infrastructure" is read as 'only road infrastructure can meet diverse travel which is completely false. The public uses trains, buses, bicycles all of which do not need to be on roads.
- 7.3.2 & 8.3.7 are incredibly limited in its review of pedestrian and cyclist safety and movement in the area during construction. Westconnex (Sydney Motorway Corporation) have an ultimate responsibility to the safety and safe passage to pedestrians and cyclists in the vicinity of the construction zone. More consultation and work needs to be done to ensure children, parents and families can move within the community without an increased risk to their health and wellbeing.

In closing, I would like to thank the WestConnex representatives who attended Haberfield Public School information night on October 12. Their presentation and responses to our questions provided us all with additional information about the Project.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this submission. I look forward to seeing all of my concerns addressed in your response.

Yours sincerely

Gavin Zauch  
0418 805 772