

To Whom it May Concern

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

We are vehemently opposed to the construction of the M4 East Tunnel and can not see how spending an astounding \$15.4 billion to achieve a marginal improvement to travel time can be justified.

As locals who will be affected by this project and who have two children attending Haberfield Public School, we feel overwhelmed by how this tunnel will affect our community and, more significantly, the health of our children.

1. Air Pollution:

For the sake of our children, and all children living and attending school in the areas within the vicinity of the tunnel portals and "smoke stacks" - we implore you to move the exits and stacks away from those most vulnerable in our communities - the young and the elderly. The stacks also need to be filtered and we are at a loss as to how the excuse of cost can be given as to why the stacks are not being filtered, when the overall estimated cost is over \$15 billion. How can you put a price on our children's health? We completely reject the notion that there will be minimal impact on our children's health if the tunnel goes ahead as currently planned. How can pumping such a concentrated amount of vehicle emissions into the air they breathe for most of their waking moments every week, not affect their health?

Haberfield Public School is within a "toxic triangle" of the tunnel portal and smoke stack - way too close for comfort for our little 5 year old's and 8 year old's lungs (and yes, their high schools will also be affected). What would you do if it were your children? With so much education about the dangers of cigarette smoking, do we with a clear conscience send them off to school every day to breathe in toxic air. We actively sought out the very best public school in the Inner West for our children - wonderful teachers, wonderful community, multicultural, lots of amazing opportunities, fantastic principal... do we pull them out of the school and send them to a new school? If the tunnel goes ahead we will be in a position of choosing between the best education and opportunities for our children or cleaner air to breathe. It's just not a fair position to put a parent in.

Not to mention, who foots the bill for the added expense of new uniforms, resources, the cost to our children's sense of belonging....

.... it's an emotional issue and rightly so....

If the project must go ahead, please move the tunnel portals away from schools, ventilate the stacks and increase the height of the stacks.

2. Community:

The Haberfield Public School community is mostly made up of families from the Haberfield, Ashfield and Five Dock areas. The proposed tunnel is going to slice right through our school community and create a dispersion. Not only will you have families leaving the school because of health concerns, the soul of the school is going to be destroyed, as families are burdened by the tunnel in different ways. Many families are losing their homes or rental premises, many will be affected by increased traffic due to new "rat runs" and everyone (yes, everyone) will be affected by the stress of a decrease in air quality.

The period of construction is also a major concern to us, as the area around our school, notably the Brescia site, will be used by heavy vehicles bringing a very immediate concern regarding emissions, traffic congestion, pedestrian safety and noise. We propose that the workers are not allowed to park within the local streets of the school (where it is already difficult to find parking) and that the heavy machinery is not used within school hours (9am to 3pm). We believe an air quality monitoring station should be put in place at our school before construction commences so that air quality can be kept at the current level. We insist that this monitoring continues indefinitely to ensure the future air quality at the school is consistent with the status quo.

3. The EIS:

Yes we have read of it what we can manage as laymen... we went to the information night at the school where our school community was addressed by the WestConnex representatives and yet we can't help but feel completely disempowered by this entire process. It feels like the beast is bigger than us and we are fearful that many people will not write a submission because as a community - honestly - we feel overwhelmed. The EIS was an intimidating document to read - and we are saying that as native English speakers - there are many parents and guardians in our school community who speak English as a second language. What sort of multicultural, fair society are we if WestConnex can't do some research into the demographic of the affected areas and provide a translation in suitable languages...? How can the process of releasing the EIS and calling for submissions be deemed as fair and reasonable in light of this?

4. Other Environmental Factors:

We are at a loss as to why the WestConnex organisation has not had to put a case forward as to why this \$15.4 billion project is a more viable and sensible scenario than putting that same money into improving the current roads and public transport system. Why in this day and age is the knee jerk reaction to traffic congestion, a tunnel to encourage more vehicular traffic? Surely we as a society can do better than this - we are more educated about the environment than ever before - we know what we are doing to the planet by encouraging more cars on the road - why are we not pumping \$15 billion into a solution that encourages people to leave their cars at home?

Furthermore - why not survey the people who are going to save 6 minutes of their time commuting through the tunnel and ask them: if you could save the life of one child, give back quality of life to several hundred children, bring a community together, save thousands of families from stress - if you could do this or save 6 minutes driving a day - which would you choose?

It's time to stop making decisions based on money and power and really decide whether this tunnel is what is best for the community and most importantly, those most vulnerable in our community: our children. Can the tunnel be planned more effectively so that the impact on our children is negligible? If there is a way please find it - we do not believe the current plans have the best interests of our children, community or planet, at heart.

Yours sincerely

Mr A and Mrs J Simon
Haberfield Public School Parents