

Director, Major Project Assessments
Department of Planning
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

2 November 2015

Submission: WestConnex M4 East EIS (SSI 6307)

I am writing to voice my strong objection to the WestConnex M4 East motorway proposal. I believe the \$15 billion the NSW Government intends to spend on this project could be better used to transform public transport in Sydney and prepare it for the next century.

Firstly, I wish to register my disapproval of the failure to follow due processes by the NSW Government's in its management of approval of the project. My objections include:

- Anger that the Government has awarded a tender for construction of the project before the EIS process has been undertaken. This shows complete lack of faith with the community.
- The Government's failure to publish a full business case for public comment and consultation to justify the expenditure of \$15 Billion of taxpayers money.
- The consequent subversion of the EIS process so that rather than providing a genuine opportunity for comment and debate, the project is seen by many as a forgone conclusion. The EIS should allow for approval, approval with modifications, non-approval or the opportunity for alternative solutions. The current procedure makes a mockery of this process.
- The extremely short time frame for comments on the EIS which is less than other similar projects.
- The lack of adequate information on the project and the failure to consider the whole WestConnex project as one. It is extremely difficult to provide informed comment about the current proposal without information about Stage 3.
- The lack of genuine consultation by the government, including meetings where government representatives can not or will not provide answers to simple questions and disregard for individuals' concerns.
- The lack of compensation for individuals and businesses who will face extreme disruption during construction and operation if the project is approved and will be severely impacted by reduced property values (e.g. people in Wattle St).

Secondly, I would like to comment on the EIS document. The EIS is a poorly written and unclear document that intentionally obscures information about many of the crucial considerations, fails to provide key measures regarding noise and air pollution and does not address significant social and environmental issues. Where issues are identified, information about amelioration measures is vague and unconvincing. It fails to honestly and fully discuss the social, environmental and economic impacts of the Westconnex or to explain why it is preferable to other alternative transport solutions.

In particular, I highlight the failure of the EIS to:

- Include the large increases in population density that are being proposed as part of the rationale for the proposal in the traffic modeling and model traffic impacts on affected local residential streets.
- Examine more sustainable public transport and rail freight alternatives

- Properly describe the long-term impacts of air pollution generated by increased traffic volumes the project is designed to accommodate.

The key reasons for my objection to the proposal as outlined in the EIS include:

- I dispute the key premise of the proposal – that it will take traffic away from Parramatta Road. I dispute this premise because:
 - Traffic seeking to avoid the toll will continue to take Parramatta Road
 - Traffic seeking to avoid the bottleneck that currently exists at the start of CityWestlink will take Parramatta Road as the WestConnex will simply bring traffic from the West more quickly to the Haberfield bottleneck. It will generate additional traffic and funnel it into already congested middle ring and inner city roads.
 - The government is also proposing high increases in density in the inner city, without imposing restrictions on car spaces in these developments. This doubling of the inner-city population without major improvements to transport and changes to car usage will result in traffic gridlock – visit the new high rises in Redfern/Moore Park area on a Saturday to see the result on densification without public transport. It's madness.
 - Without adequate public transport, the current congestion will continue and car numbers will continue to grow and any relief the motorway might provide for commuters from the West (the EIS figures on travel times and car numbers don't stack up) will be short-lived.
- I believe that the solution to congestion in Sydney is better public transport!
 - Just as the solution to congestion in the inner city is to restrict car access, change attitudes to travel, encourage more flexible working hours and encourage walking and cycling, the focus for road congestion should be on changing attitudes to commuting. This is not possible without a much better public transport system.
 - I have recently spent 4 months travelling in Europe and could only lament the backward state of NSW's public transport and the continued insistence on the primacy of private car travel. With proper bike lanes (Copenhagen), reliable and frequent metro systems (every city in Europe has one) and high speed inter city trains (even Spain with its disastrous economy has these) NSW will become a basket case economy.
 - More motorways are not the solution – in many places motorways are being removed because it is widely acknowledge that they are not the solution to traffic congestion.
- I am extremely concerned about local impacts on my community including:
 - Heritage Impacts
 - We purchased our property in Haberfield in 1997 because of its heritage values and because it is a quiet, friendly community.
 - We are horrified about the proposed demolition of 53 properties in the Haberfield Conservation Area and the loss of other Heritage items. Haberfield has been a Heritage Conservation Area since 1985 and listed on the National Register since 1991. If, with a

stroke of a pen, the Government can destroy a huge swathe of our heritage, what hope is there of protection Haberfield from other developments?

- I am particularly concerned about the impact on the Yasmar Estate and the citing of one of the on/off ramps to the tunnel right at its doorstep. It is a disgrace that successive NSW Governments have allowed this precious heritage property to fall into decay, but the impacts from construction of the WestConnex have not been addressed adequately by the EIS.
- The Government's own heritage experts say that the heritage value and significance of Haberfield will be diminished by Westconnex.
- The EIS does not address the issue of compensation for residents whose property values will be reduced as a result of this project.
- I strongly object to the destruction of heritage properties and urge the Government to reconsider this plan.

○ Construction impacts (noise, vibrations).

- The EIS forecasts three years for construction including below ground construction activities 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. The EIS does not provide clear or transparent assessment of the impact of vibrations and noise from drilling on houses in the construction zone or surrounding areas. We have recently experienced construction of new footpaths in Haberfield at nights and its impact on our sleeping, performance during the day and mental health has been significant.
- Increased road transport to support night works including trucks for spoilage, delivery, cement etc and consequent noise will have a significant effect on the sleep and mental health of residents.
- The EIS does not provide adequate information about what the government will do to rectify any damage or provide compensation for damage to properties caused during the drilling of the tunnel.

○ Traffic Impacts

- As well as the impact of a significant number of construction vehicles, the construction process will have more significant impacts than the EIS suggest, leading to rat runs throughout Haberfield and increased congestion and noise on local streets.
- Rat runs pose extra risk to children, pedestrians and cyclists and impede local traffic. They will bring additional air pollution to residential streets.
- The project will simply move the congestion hotspot at the end of the M4 at Concorde/Strathfield to Haberfield. Already experiencing significant congestion in peak hour, the City West Link will become a car park earlier each morning and remain one for longer each day.
- Post construction, local streets will remain rat runs, particularly with road closures and reduction in lanes on Parramatta Rd. Large

volumes of traffic will travel along Martin St, Chandos St, Waratah St, Bland St, Alt St, Ramsay Road, Hawthorn Parade, Marion St, Denman Ave, Dalhousie St, etc. The impact of this traffic has not been adequately described or assessed in the EIS.

- Traffic in Bland St, Ashfield which is extremely narrow is currently a disaster, with frequent delays as cars try to pass each other and frequent knocks to cars' rear vision mirrors. With use of the Brescia site as a construction site, this will only become worse. Crossing Parramatta Road to Ashfield (to access the railway station) will be even more difficult than it currently is.

- Air Quality

- I am appalled that the project includes ventilation stacks and on/off ramps(also with high volume emissions) within close proximity to Ashfield Infants home, Haberfield Public School, numerous child care centres and aged care facilities.
- Our house is less than 500m from the planned ventilation stack. If Stage three goes ahead, we will also be subject to emissions from the ventilation stack in Leichhardt. In addition, we are with 500 m of both the on/off ramps, hemmed in on all sides.
- The EIS does not provide enough information, including scientific information, to adequately address resident concerns about impact on air quality. While I understand that the impact of car emissions in the inner-west is already high, the concentration of the release of these emissions in one area is likely to exacerbate air quality issues and health effects on residents with respiratory problems. My daughter and I both suffer from asthma and this is a real concern for us.
- The Government should consider the impact of diesel fuel on resident's health and move to limit the use of motorized transport rather than encourage it. Rather than spending precious taxpayer funds on motorways, I implore the government to develop a vision for the future that is based on public transport and rail freight rather than road based transportation.

- Social Impacts

- I don't think that people in Government are listening to what citizens are increasingly demanding. We want livable cities, we value our communities and neighbourhoods, we want safer places to walk and ride our bikes, we want 21 Century solutions.
- Building motorways that divide communities and neighbourhoods is not the solution. Public and active transport options are. If our children can't walk or ride their bikes to school many parents will end up driving them. If we can't get to work, meetings or social activities easily by public transport we are forced to drive. If there are no jobs where we live we will travel large distances to find work, and will probably drive there.
- Our homes and communities are precious to us. If the Government rides roughshod over local communities they will take whatever

steps they can to resist, whether that's community action, civil disobedience or legal action.

- I recently worked on a stall at the Leichhardt Festa. No one I spoke to thinks the WestConnex is a good idea. People think its dumb, they think the Government is short sighted, they think that it is only concerned for the interests of big business and developers.
- Many people are depressed about what is happening to their communities. The EIS does not attempt to address the mental health impacts of the project on the local community.

For all these reasons, I object to the WestConnex M4 East.

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I have not made any political donations in the requisite period.