

I make the following submission to the Environmental Impact Statement (**EIS**) exhibition for the Wesconnex 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 marginal improvement to travel time is justified. I am angry that the Government has ignored the community by signing contracts to build this project before releasing this EIS, completing and releasing the full business case, or obtaining planning approval. I am appalled that the 'consultation' with community has resulted in a community left feeling disempowered and unable to influence the outcome. Many residents have become disengaged in the process and although they are opposed to the project, will not submit a response to the EIS because they believe it won't make any difference.

Without access to the business case the community can't assess which other alternatives were considered and what their associated costs were. My conclusion is that the business case does not make a good case for the selected project design, otherwise the tunnel proponents would be using it in their marketing. It makes me mistrustful of our government and fearful for what will be pushed through next without proper process.

The Project will have a devastating impact on the communities of Ashfield and Haberfield and indeed on the Inner West as a whole. Ashfield is one of the most densely populated communities in Sydney. Haberfield holds great historical significance. The decision to proceed raises many questions; it does not make sense. This Project will irreversibly destroy the heritage values of Haberfield and hack two giant holes through the middle of our community. With so much rhetoric from our politicians around building "liveable cities for the future" it makes no sense to destroy one of the most "liveable" parts of metropolitan Sydney; Haberfield.

I want the following addressed:

#### **Public Transport should be a part of the plan**

- Light rail along Parramatta Rd from Concord to the CBD. Light rail is preferred to buses due to the amount of emissions inhaled on a bus being significantly higher than on a light rail carriage.
- Express bus service from Haberfield to the city.
- Consideration of a concurrent tunnel for a fast train connection from Strathfield, ultimately to the city.
- The EIS says (4.2.3) that public transport should 'complement the roads network'. It should be the other way around - the roads network should complement the public transport network.

#### **Release the full business case/Justification for the Project**

- What data is there to support the assertion that trucks will be diverted off local roads and into the tunnel. How do we know trucks will choose to use the tunnel?
- Why is the height of buildings a consideration for the tunnel route? The tunnel corridor option specifically includes the ability to develop taller buildings (and thus develop more intensely) Parramatta Rd. This should not be relevant to the Project.
- The EIS says (4.2.3) that '*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. There is strong evidence that if public transport were provided for the non-commercial traffic on Parramatta road, then the road would be capable of meeting the commercial traffic needs without the new tunnels. This point has not been addressed by the EIS.
- Public transport should be included in the development of the Project. The EIS dismisses a four lane tunnel on the basis of the bottle neck it would cause onto Parramatta Rd and City West Link, however, there should have been consideration to turning that fourth lane into a train, light rail, or bus lane.

### **Wait for Stage 3**

- Given the EIS itself shows minimal improvements to traffic time from Homebush to the city/airport on the basis of this Stage 2 of the overall Westconnex project and most of the anticipated improvements depend on Stage 3 of the Project, work on Stage 2 should be dependent on approval being given for Stage 3. If Stage 3 either fails to get approval or funding, even the EIS says there will be minimal improvement – it is reckless to spend \$15 billion on minimal improvement for one route and worsening of traffic in effected areas such as Taverners Hill. It is clear from the EIS there will be devastating 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. If Stage 3 is altered in a material way it may result in additional cost and unnecessary impact on the area.

### **Noise Abatement**

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

### **Pollution Reduction and Monitoring**

- Increase the height of the stacks to reduce impact of emissions on local area and increase likelihood that emissions will be dispersed more widely.
- Filter the smoke stack and relocate away from schools, childcare centres, and retirement homes.
- Monitor emissions at Haberfield Public School, Dobroyd Public School, and the Infants Home before, during and after the project.
- Note that the EIS identifies (4.4.5) a disadvantage with the interchange at Parramatta Rd is that *'there would be issues with vehicles queuing back into the tunnel during the morning peak'* there must be monitoring of the emission levels outside the portals on:
  - Parramatta Road between Liverpool St and Tebbutt St where Parramatta Rd reduces to two lanes.
  - City West Link at Timbrell Drive/Mortley Ave.
- Assumed improvements in vehicle emissions is integral to the modelling on pollution around the stack due to improvements in new car technology, yet the bulk of the emissions are recognised to come from trucks. The modelling for this should be published for critical analysis by the community.
- There is no parallel modelling of emission levels for the scenario where public transport options are put in place instead of Westconnex. Without modelling this scenario the community is being deprived of critical details with which to judge the project's suitability for Sydney. The lack of this modelling also indicates a bias towards building roads over public transport which is detrimental to the health of Sydney-siders. Active transport increases the health of those who participate in it as well as those who don't yet still benefit from the reduction in cars on the road. There should be an objective approach that treats all transport options and seeks the optimal combination of transport methods. There is no evidence of an objective approach to transport options in designing this project.

## **Traffic Management**

- Reduction in local traffic, monitoring of rat runs, and requirements for amelioration if not acceptable
  - 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 HPS, 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).
- Restrict access to Haberfield to deter rat running
  - Remove the right turn into Waratah St Haberfield. Haberfield/Dobroyd Point residents can access their homes via Parramatta Rd at Dalhousie, O'Connor, and Sloane Streets and St Davids and Haberfield Roads. Including a right turn into Waratah would encourage rat runs through Haberfield and significantly increase traffic outside Dobroyd Point Public school.
- Improve access for local traffic
  - Provide 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).
  - Specifically consider whether any additional right turn access is required into Dalhousie St from Parramatta Rd for west-bound traffic along Parramatta Rd.
- The following flaws are evident in the traffic modelling:
  - 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 specific 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 itself accepts that traffic on some sections of Parramatta Road and also 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.

## **Haberfield Connection to Ashfield and Five Dock**

- There should be improved 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 (at Dalhousie St). This would provide a safer crossing for the many children from Ashfield who attend school and day care in Haberfield. It would also decrease the need for a road level pedestrian crossing at Dalhousie St which would be the first set of traffic lights for traffic exiting the tunnel and a major congestion point on the part of Parramatta Road and high risk of red-light running.
  - There should be a pedestrian bridge further along Parramatta Rd to remove the need for pedestrian crossings at Liverpool Rd and Sloane St which will similarly congest traffic.
- There should be improved connectivity between Haberfield and Five Dock across Wattle St to enable children to safely cross as there are many children from Five Dock who attend school and child care in Haberfield.
  - A pedestrian and cycle bridge across Wattle/City West Link at Waratah St linking to Timbrell Park
  - A pedestrian and cycle bridge across Wattle St at Ramsay St given that Ramsay St is proposed to be three stage crossing and Wattle St will be 80 metres wide.

## **Investment 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).
  - For example, the space between Wolesley St and Northcote Ave would serve well as green space to minimise the impact of the stacks and widened roads. A pedestrian/cycle overpass could be integrated across Wattle st. Community could be involved in designing/planning for the space. Projects of this kind will help to bring the community back together and go some way towards addressing the grief associated with the destruction caused by Westconnex.
- Set specific objectives for employment of locals.
- 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, Northcote Ave construction site, City West link at and beyond the tunnel exit). These quotas should be approved by local councils.
- Provide a fund for the Ashfield and Haberfield community (perhaps through Council as grants) to address the unexpected consequences of this road. Projects from the fund should be determined by the local community.

### **Improvements to 'Active transport' options (for cyclists, pedestrians)**

- The Project should consider web-style pedestrian and cycle bridges to enable diagonal crossing and improve active transport options. The goal of the Project was stated to maintain status quo for pedestrian and cycle access. This is unacceptable. Where major investment is made in roads, active transport options must be raised to the same (at a minimum) increased level of usability. Pedestrian and cycle transport infrastructure cost is barely perceptible in a budget of this size, yet the proven benefits are enormous in terms of health, safety, community engagement, community cohesiveness, etc.
- There should be a pedestrian bridge over Parramatta Rd as stated above.
- There should be improved connectivity across Wattle St.

### **Heritage**

- This Project intends to destroy many heritage houses, destroy items of historical significance and chop up this historic area and community with a motorway, while I am unable (rightly) to build a garage beside my house because I live in a heritage area. The EIS itself accepts this permanent loss of our history and I fiercely object to this project destroying heritage in this way.

### **Compensation for home owners facing compulsory acquisition or those nearby**

- Require generous compensation to home owners whose homes are being compulsorily acquired to put them in the position of being able to buy back into the area at a comparable level. Home owners in the position are across the board reporting heavy handed tactics, low ball offers, delay tactics. The Act states that where there is disagreement between valuers, the decision should err on the side of the home owner. The RMS has failed to do this, instead they have hidden behind low valuations and failed to make decisions that would resolve matters fairly and efficiently, relying on householders' need for a quick resolution to attain bargain purchases.
- Offer voluntary acquisitions and WDA-funded dilapidation reports for those properties near construction sites in Northcote, Wolseley, Wattle, Walker, Ramsay, Chandos, and Loftus Streets.

### **Compensation for renters forced out of their community**

- Require compensation to households who have been forced to move out of the community, change their childrens' schools and childcare due to acquisition of the properties they were renting, and the subsequent lack of affordable comparable rental properties, as a direct result of the Westconnex project. These families should be subsidised to rent in this community, at least until their children complete their schooling. Their moving and associated costs should be covered by Westconnex.

### **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. I submit that the Project should be required to monitor parking issues along the area of construction, particularly outside Haberfield Public School and Dobroyd Public School.

This project will not solve Sydney's traffic problems and NSW taxpayer's money is better spent investing in a system that uses Public Transport as its main component and roads as complementary infrastructure. The world's most effective and desirable cities are building less roads and their planners are taking healthier and more progressive decisions.

Anticipating the challenges for Sydney as it grows requires innovating thinking, people centred thinking, not road-biased planning. Please consider my concerns and address them in your response to the community's submissions to the EIS.