

A People's M4 EIS

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This website exists to help people take back some control over the planning process. It is independent of any other organisation and is entirely volunteer run and funded.

Our aim is to help people access information needed to understand how the NSW Baird government's 33 kilometre Westconnex tollway project would affect not just transport options but also the future environment and health of Sydney. The People's M4 EIS is part of a broader community attempt to open up public debate about the Westconnex and counter the lack of transparency in decision making surrounding it.

The Westconnex is a single project, to be delivered in five separate stages. This means that while supposed broad benefits of the whole project are constantly proclaimed by the NSW government and Sydney Motorway Corporation, the negative impacts of the whole project are never assessed.

The EIS for the Westconnex M4 East was published by the NSW Department of Planning as a large PDF document – over 1GB, and nearly 5000 thousands of pages – on September 9, 2015. The community was given only 45 days to submit responses, although this was extended by ten days to November 2 because of a failure by the Westconnex Delivery Authority to file all the required documents.

Before waiting for the results of the EIS and planning process, the Westconnex Delivery Authority has already awarded the contract to build the M4 East to a consortium led by CIMIC (previously Leightons) and Samsung.

The way that NSW Planning Department and the Westconnex Delivery Authority have designed and published the EIS does not make it accessible. We've made it a little easier to find the bits you want (<http://m4eis.org/category/table-of-contents/>) in the PDFs.

We have published several parts of the EIS in a format that is easier to read (<http://m4eis.org/category/selected-sections/>) and enables you to cut and paste text more easily to build your own submission.

We have solicited and shared some 'plain English' commentaries to help you to make your own informed assessment of the Westconnex M4 tunnel. One of the problems with the EIS is that it fails to engage with contemporary developments in transport planning and critiques of its approach. This is a serious problem when the decisions to be made will have a huge impact.

We will be publishing some sample submissions, so that you can see what other people do or don't like about the M4 East project.

You can comment on any page or reply to anyone else's comments. If you have made a submission you would like us to share, please let us know. If you have ideas for how we can develop the People's EIS, leave a comment on this page.

In this way we hope together to break through the daunting amount of data and help the community to build strong individual and group responses.

Your contributions will help build an independent source of information for the community about the project.

Here's how you make a submission to the official planning process :

<http://m4eis.org/2015/09/11/how-to-object/> (<http://m4eis.org/2015/09/11/how-to-object/>)

Additional Note on November 2

Parts of the People's M4 EIS has been submitted to the NSW Department of Planning to be considered as part of the assessment process.

We will continue provide updates on the rest of the planning process.

People: Many people have contributed to this project including Ben Aveling, Wendy Bacon, Luke Bacon, Henare Degan, Nicole Gooch, Miska Mandic and others.

8 thoughts on “A People's M4 EIS”

1. **Kerry** says:
[27/09/2015 at 11:10 am](#) [Edit](#)

Fantastic! Thank you to those who have worked so hard to get this site up-and-running. It will assist us residents to share our concerns and share what we have learned in interactions with the WDA “team”.

[Reply \(http://m4eis.org/?replytocom=45#respond\)](http://m4eis.org/?replytocom=45#respond)

2. **Kathryn Calman** says:
[27/09/2015 at 3:14 pm](#) [Edit](#)

This is an amazing piece of work that you have put together. Thank you!!!

[Reply \(http://m4eis.org/?replytocom=46#respond\)](http://m4eis.org/?replytocom=46#respond)

3. **Anthony Johns** says:
[30/09/2015 at 9:44 pm](#) [Edit](#)

I think the project would be more worthwhile if it were less obviously partisan. As it stands, it's hard to believe anything you solicit written in "plain English" won't just be polemic

[Reply \(http://m4eis.org/?replytocom=47#respond\)](http://m4eis.org/?replytocom=47#respond)

- **wendybaconblog** says:
[01/10/2015 at 3:34 pm](#) [Edit](#)

The EIS is written entirely from the perspective of the 'proponent' which is Westconnex. Aecom that managed and prepared much of the EIS has involvement in many aspects of this project – from concept design to 'traffic director'. So it is reasonable to warn people to treat official EIS data and its presentation with scepticism. Likewise claims of critics should also be tested. One of the ideas behind the project is to subject the empirical claims to scrutiny so if you see any factual claims by critics you think are false Anthony Johns please be sure to comment.

[Reply \(http://m4eis.org/?replytocom=48#respond\)](http://m4eis.org/?replytocom=48#respond)

4. **Michael Luis** says:
[06/10/2015 at 8:30 pm](#) [Edit](#)

Keep up the good work.
Big thanks to all the contributors.

[Reply \(http://m4eis.org/?replytocom=76#respond\)](http://m4eis.org/?replytocom=76#respond)

5. **Janet Dandy-Ward** says:
[26/10/2015 at 10:22 pm](#) [Edit](#)

Thank you so much for putting this together, this is really great information!

[Reply \(http://m4eis.org/?replytocom=233#respond\)](http://m4eis.org/?replytocom=233#respond)

6. **Phil Siefert** says:
[31/10/2015 at 5:43 pm](#) [Edit](#)

Given the steps that have been taken by the NSW Government to privatise Westconnex Delivery Authority and NSW Planning department in the name of "fast tracking": such as construction awards before planning approval, lack of independent review, and no obvious review of public transport options – I have never felt more sceptical and disillusioned by a government.

Thank you for the clarity of your submission —

[Reply \(http://m4eis.org/?replytocom=302#respond\)](http://m4eis.org/?replytocom=302#respond)

7. **Matt Mushalik** says:
[02/11/2015 at 9:08 pm](#) [Edit](#)

The full listing of all chapters was very useful when writing my submission which is in the downloads section of my website

<http://crudeoilpeak.info/downloads> (<http://crudeoilpeak.info/downloads>)

[Reply \(http://m4eis.org/?replytocom=354#respond\)](http://m4eis.org/?replytocom=354#respond)

[Blog at WordPress.com \(https://wordpress.com/?ref=footer_blog\)](https://wordpress.com/?ref=footer_blog). [The Big Brother Theme](https://wordpress.com/themes/big-brother/)
(<https://wordpress.com/themes/big-brother/>).

A People's M4 EIS

Summary of M4EIS – Social and Economic Impact reports

[04/10/201502/11/2015](#) [wendybaconblog](#) [Commentaries & Objections](#) [Ashfield](#), [Business impacts](#), [Cintra Park](#), [Concord](#), [Constructions impacts](#), [Economic Impacts](#), [Haberfield](#), [Heritage](#), [Homebush](#), [impact on social infrastructure](#), [Operational impacts](#), [Parramatta Road](#), [public transport](#), [Social Impacts](#), [Strathfield](#), [Wattle Street](#).

This is a summary of the sections of the EIS which deal with Social and Economic Impacts. It also contains some editorial comment and critique

What is the purpose of the summary?

The lives of many thousands of people would be negatively affected by the M4E project. Many have already been disrupted and experienced the severe stress of losing homes and community. Others are living in fear of the intense noise, dust and large scale construction that will surround them for years or are worrying about what it would be like to be live beside a massive tollway. Beyond this specific proposal for the M4E tunnel, millions will be affected by the whole Westconnex project. There is the potential health, social and economic costs of more traffic congestion and the lost opportunity cost of spending \$15.5 billion on tollroads rather than public transport. In evaluating this EIS, it's important to understand how adequately these negative impacts have been evaluated. But this is difficult because the reports are long and often repetitive.

The community members could research and describe those impacts themselves – and some residents and groups are doing that – but it is also useful to understand what is in the EIS report. This summary of the Westconnex Social and Economic impacts reports will guide you through the material.

This *is* a summary so by publishing this summary, we're not suggesting that the material in the EIS reports is adequate or even accurate. In fact, even a cursory reading will convince those who know about this project that it is an inadequate report. For example when the EIS refers to 'community consultation' it might be referring to what many members of the community have

experienced as inadequate information provision. Some ‘facts’ may also be selected rather than others because they promote the case for the Westconnex. Much of the information in the reports was not gathered by consultants GHD but by Westconnex communications staff. So treat the reports and summaries as starting points for further investigation. Soon, we will publish our first critique of this section. You can use any of our material to produce your own submission. If you see points that you think should be investigated or are wrong but don’t have time or resources to do that, please leave a comment at the bottom of this post.

It’s also relevant to keep in mind that these reports are not independent. They were signed off by AECOM (<http://www.aecom.com/>), which has major interests in the project. The work was done for AECOM by GHD (<http://www.ghd.com/ghd-australia/>) another major contractor who boast on its website that “together with their clients are creating community benefit”. The clients are other major private companies and public authorities. The question addressed by the reports is not ‘given these social impacts, should the project go ahead?’ but ‘Assuming the project goes ahead what will the impact be?’

Some points of interest have been emphasised in ‘bold’ and a few Editor’s comments in ‘italics’.

If you want to read the full reports the links to Appendices M (Social Impact) and N (Economic Impact) are here (<http://m4eis.org/category/table-of-contents/social-economic/>)

Summary Chapter 14 Social and economic, Appendix M (Social Impact Assessment) and Appendix N (Economic Impact Assessment)

Study area

The study area is defined in terms of both local precincts and local government areas. Generally, it is narrowly defined -for example, although the M4E may together with the M5 impact on Marrickville and City of Sydney local government areas, they are excluded from the assessment.

The study area is defined as the ‘**Ashfield, Auburn, Burwood, Canada Bay and Strathfield local government areas**’ which are compared to the greater Sydney region ‘as the wider catchment for the project’

The social impact assessment considers five local study area precincts: **Homebush precinct, Concord precinct, Cintra Park precinct, Wattle Street precinct and the Parramatta Road precinct.**

The economic impact assessment outlines the following areas as those ‘most likely to experience business impacts due to the project’—**Homebush SA2, Strathfield SA2, Concord West – North Strathfield SA2, Concord – Mortlake – Cabarita SA2, Burwood – Croydon SA2, Five Dock – Abbotsford SA2 – Ashfield SA2, Haberfield – Summer Hill SA2**; but also makes references to the wider economy particularly in Appendix N (Economic Impact Assessment)

The socio-economic assessment also draws on community consultation ‘undertaken...during land acquisition and community engagement activities’ and is planned to continue through to operation of the M4 – East project. This consultation led to the following issues being identified: ‘property impacts, traffic and transport, air quality, ventilation and health, preferred design, open space, recreational and community facilities, heritage and environment, noise and vibration, amenity, construction [and the] community consultation process.’ *(Editor: The report assumes that this community consultation has taken place but many residents deny this. The report also recommends that counselling and support should be available for people being forced to move from their homes but many involved in the process say this is not happening.)*

No consultation was undertaken specifically for the Economic Impact Assessment

Assessment Methodology

The approach to the study included desktop research from Australian Bureau of Statistics and other sources (there is a lot of that), some consultation with Councils and some social infrastructure providers, documentation of the consultation process and a review of technical reports. ‘Social research’ was conducted to establish community values and local issues but it not clear what form this took and no references are provided.

(Editor: At a Strathfield EIS exhibition session, it was explained that two GHD consultants did some direct consultation with Councils in 2014 but in 2015, after the final route was announced, Councils were not further consulted. In 2015, consultation with social infrastructure providers was only done by giving questions to WDA communications staff who communicated answers back. There was a review of other technical reports, most of which were only available in final form shortly before the EIS was completed in early September. No focus groups were conducted and no direct interviews between the consultant GHD and affected residents were conducted.)

Assessment Framework

On page 23 of Appendix M Table 3.1 describes a ratings framework which was used to rank or assess the impacts. The framework has time, location and level of impact (negligible, minor, moderate and major) dimensions but there is little reference to the application of the framework in the rest of the report and it is not clear where and how it was applied.

Existing environment

This section examines the existing context of the local government areas and precincts this project is likely to affect, but is generally limited to the physical footprint only (ie social and most economic effects that occur outside the footprint of the project will not be able to be assessed by this report)

- 258,326 people reside in the study area as of 2011, with this set to increase by 52% to 393,750 by 2031
- 64,000 people employed in the study area as of 2011, with this potentially to rise to 100,000 by 2031
- Gross regional product (GRP) of the area \$21.4 billion (2012-13) with 18,200 businesses in the area in 2014 (14-8), mainly small businesses (91% under 20 employees) and most commonly real estate (16%), professional (14%) and construction (13%)
- Parramatta Road currently congested, limited parking and low amenity leading to reduced business viability, with A Plan for Growing Sydney outlining Sydney Olympic Park, Rhodes and Burwood as strategic centres to have 10,000 jobs and be 'employment, retail, housing, services and mixed uses' prioritised; also priority revitalisation at Wentworth Point and Carter Street
- Business clusters close to the project are listed as Lidcombe Business Park and Campus, Homebush Business Park, Sydney Markets, Direct Factory Outlets (DFO) Homebush, the Bakehouse Quarter, businesses along Parramatta Road and town centres and shopping/business centres including a cluster close to Strathfield Station, Great North Road (Five Dock), Burwood Road and Liverpool Road (Ashfield)
- Cars are the dominant mode of transport for the area, however car ownership (1.3 to 1.6 vehicles per household compared to the Greater Sydney average of 1.6) and car usage (65% weekday trips in private vehicles) are both lower than the Greater Sydney average
- 14% of average weekday trips by people living in the area are undertaken by train and 2% by bus
- 30% of vehicles on the M4 during morning peak are travelling for work, increasing to 40% during business hours
- 63% of freight in NSW was carried by road in 2011, freight task in NSW expected to almost double to 794 million tonnes by 2031, 'maintaining an efficient and effective road network is vital to support this growth' with limited additional capacity during peak periods
- 13 hours of congestion per day on M4, with average peak speeds to 38km/h on the M4 and 17km/h on Parramatta Road—'Sustained congestion increases the time and cost of travel for freight and commercial movements, reduces the efficiency of freight movements and business travel, and hinders economic growth'
- In 2011 congestion cost NSW \$5.1 billion, rise to \$8.8 billion by 2020

Social infrastructure 'has been identified as part of the social impact assessment'

- Seven community facilities
- Eight aged care and nursing homes
- Five primary schools, three high schools and three Kindergarten to Year 12 schools, five childcare centres and one tertiary education provider
- A number of sports and recreation facilities
- A range of health and emergency services
- Religious services
- Shopping areas

Transport – Access and connectivity

- 'major traffic routes' are Parramatta Road, the M4, Concord Road and Homebush Bay Drive/Centenary Drive
- In terms of public transport, seven train stations service the area, North Strathfield, Flemington, Homebush, Strathfield, Burwood, Croydon and Ashfield, and it is also serviced by seven bus routes (525, 526, 415, 461, 490, 491 and 492)
- Pedestrians and cyclists are said to have varied conditions, with good conditions existing around residential areas as well as Sydney Markets, Sydney Olympic Park, Rhodes and Burwood having walkable access to rail and bus connections:
- **Pedestrian and cyclist conditions will deteriorate during construction as Bill Boyce Reserve is to be occupied for construction and currently links a pedestrian and cyclist route between the south side of the M4 and a pedestrian bridge**

Five precincts

- 3 of 5 precincts have younger age profiles (Homebush, Concord and Parramatta Road with significantly more aged 18-34), with Cintra Park ('with more 70 to 84 year olds') and Wattle Street exhibiting older populations

- Homebush with 'high rates of vehicle ownership and car dependence for travel to work' yet 'higher train use for travel to work', Concord with lower car ownership and car dependence and higher train use to work, Wattle Street with higher rates of vehicle ownership and car dependency to travel to work, and higher bus use to travel to work. Parramatta Road with lower car ownership and usage, and higher public transport use.
- New Parramatta Rd: Draft Parramatta Road Urban Renewal Strategy envisions 'up to 40,000 new dwellings and 50,000 new jobs...generated in the urban renewal precincts' and 'access to public and active transport', three of eight precincts for urban renewal are within the project area (Homebush, Burwood and Kings Bay).

Issues raised by councils within the project boundary (see Appendix M, pp. 61-62 and also Appendix D of the Social Impact Assessment)

(Editor: Important to note that consultations with Councils were only done on the concept plan. They were not repeated in 2015 after the final route was announced. This is important and explains, for instance, why Ashfield Council did not raise the issue of loss of housing, impact on residents of losing their houses and concerns about loss of heritage. In other words, the Planning Department required Westconnex to consult with Councils but failed to give Councils an opportunity to express their views on the chosen route.)

Ashfield Council: Impacts on access and connectivity including to social infrastructure and accessibility by pedestrians and cyclists, impacts specific to older residents (such as mobility, safety, connectivity and isolation), increased travel time impacting on health and wellbeing, Parramatta Road becoming even more of a barrier between the north and south sides of the LGA, 'impact on wellbeing of families, extended time away from families due to increased commute', 'health and wellbeing impacts on local residents resulting from tunnel exhaust emissions, as well as visual impacts of ventilation stacks', noise and vibration impacts, and the 'physical and mental health implications of the proposal'

Burwood Council: Increased traffic on local road network (especially during construction as drivers avoid Parramatta Road, and also following project completion), noise, vibration and dust concerns, location of exhaust stacks and associated health concerns for those who live, work or attend school near them, concerns regarding the need for adequate consultation with residents whose properties will be acquired, need to limit negative heritage impacts and retain local character

City of Canada Bay Council: Impact on street trees, potential disbursement of unregistered brothels into surrounding residential areas, benefits to Parramatta Road, property acquisition impacts on community cohesion, noted resident action groups against WestConnex, parking strategy to minimise worker parking in local streets, opposition of Concord Oval for the site of a construction compound—'impacts on national, regional and local sporting teams', air, noise and vibration issues during construction, air and noise impacts during operation

Strathfield Council: Journey disruptions and increased traffic, vulnerable communities will be most affected (such as by access ramps, reduced value of dwellings affecting retirement, further segregation from Strathfield town centre), construction aligning with Ford Factory development leading to traffic problems, Underwood Road traffic problems worsening, impacts on pedestrian access (such as across Centenary Drive), concern regarding ventilation stacks close to residential areas, financial impact of tolls on community members, local heritage and biodiversity impacts, reduced access to residential and commercial areas

Auburn City Council :Impacts to cycleways

Issues raised by social infrastructure consultations (see Appendix M, pp. 63-64 and Appendix E in the SIA) include:

Sydney Cheil Uniting Church: Lost green space and car parking, changed traffic flow, amenity impacts

West's Tigers: Disrupted training as Cintra Park Hockey Field relocated to St Lukes oval, concern at need to find new ovals, noise, dust and air quality, impacts by construction workers to local roads and parking

The Willows Private Nursing Home: Impacted access for staff, deliveries, patient transport and emergency services, noise impacts and duration of construction works, changed access due to relocation of route 406 bus stop and reduced privacy for residents

Yasmar Training Facility: Loss of accommodation for trainees, changed access due to route 406 bus stop relocation, changed pedestrian access

Haberfield Presbyterian Aged Care: Noise and dust impacts

The Infants Home: Impacts on access and parking, air quality and visual impacts

Haberfield Public School: Impact on children's safety, construction noise and air quality impacts

St Andrew's Anglican Church (Strathfield): Impact to local roads and parking from construction workers, traffic noise impacts on church activities, traffic congestion, noise and parking impacts

Concord Baptist Church: Changed access and air quality impacts from ventilation outlets

Ashfield Bowls Club: Changed access due to bus stop relocation, impact to local roads and parking for patrons and deliveries, amenity and safety impacts and street parking impacts

Assessment of construction impacts

This section summarises the ‘potential adverse and beneficial impacts during project construction’ as given in Chapter 14 Social and economic, Appendix M (Social Impact Assessment) and Appendix N (Economic Impact Assessment).

WestConnex Development Authority identifies economic stimulus from construction expenditure and employment to ‘boost...the economy’ and “Indirect effects’ [that] are flow-on effects to the wider state economy, such as increased expenditure and employment within industries that supply to the businesses that directly supply the project with their goods or services’, also ‘Employment opportunities would grow in the region...increase in demand for labour may increase wages in the region, particularly for construction workers’

Acquisition of properties:

See Table 10.1 taken from Appendix M, p. i

- 291 properties affected in total, 168 that are to be acquired (a ‘conservative’ estimate—see Appendix M, p. 66), along with partial acquisition of fifteen residential dwellings (though the document states that these partially acquired dwellings will not be impacted). Residents would also be forced to leave 98 properties already owned by RMS.
- 66 residential properties of heritage significance (Appendix M, p. iv)
- About 460 people will be affected through acquisitions
- Table 10,1 states 14 residential homes in Homebush; 46 in Concord; 83 in Wattle Street and 25 in Parramatta Rd.
- All properties to be vacated by the end of the first quarter of 2016, WestConnex Development Authority began acquisitions in 2013, in June 2015 individual property owners were notified that dwellings to be acquired
- ‘Significant social risks’ (Appendix M, p. 96) from property acquisition include ‘inaccessibility of equivalent housing at a comparable cost...relocation health risks...[and] altered access to social infrastructure’ as well as potential housing stress due to higher rent or house costs. It is ‘expected that the majority of owner-occupiers would aim to relocate within the local area’, and effects may be compounded by the timeframe of just 9 months for some households to be relocated, market volatility and reduced housing stock available to relocate into (Appendix M, p. 68)
- The stress and anxiety of compulsory acquisition, or uncertainty surrounding the process, leads to impacts on health, well-being and quality of life, which have been worsened by the uncertainty and the changing footprint of the project with some dwellings originally to be acquired now not, and some originally not impacted now required for the project (Appendix M, p. 68)

- Vulnerable households (e.g. the sick, frail elderly, low income etc) would be most susceptible to these impacts. These risks would also be exacerbated for less vulnerable households, as land acquisition would increase property demand in the local area with some households with only nine months to identify alternate properties. Two properties to be acquired in the Concord Road precinct are public housing properties. With already low levels of public housing in the area, this would further reduce the available affordable housing stock locally. (Appendix M p. ii)
- Property acquisition and project development in the Wattle Street Haberfield precinct is expected to exacerbate the severance currently created by Wattle Street, with the potential to negatively impact on local community cohesion.
- Also 23 commercially zoned properties and one residential zoned, with a total of 20 commercial buildings to be acquired.

‘Overall it is anticipated that the social impacts of relocating for many of the directly affected households would be major short-term impacts. In some cases, where households are unable to relocate locally, the social impact may involve an extended recovery time to re-establish social networks and daily routines for work, study and recreation. Alternatively, where households need to incur higher levels of debt in order to remain in the local area, increased mortgage or rental stress may result in greater and longer term social impacts’

(Editor: This clearly identifies significant social impacts but lack depth of information about the actual risks because no research was done on the ground on this aspect by the consultants.)

Changes in amenity

Three years of noise and vibration impacts, which are stated to ‘cause stress and anxiety, affect the enjoyment of outdoor spaces and disturb normal indoor activities...[and] interrupt sleep patterns, with consequent impacts on health and wellbeing’, and ‘In locations where the tunnel is less than 40 metres deep’ such as at Concord Road, to the east of Burwood Road, to the south of Parramatta Road, Ashfield and at Wattle Street ‘there is the potential for ground borne noise to exceed noise criteria for longer periods’, up to 2 weeks, only to conclude: ‘More consideration of management measures would be required during detailed design to minimise and mitigate these impacts’

Noise impacts also associated with construction traffic have the potential to affect local roads (see Appendix M, p. 85)

Given ‘the potential for exceedance of night time noise criteria at some construction compound sites’, and the 3 year construction timeframe, property treatments or alternate accommodation for residents might be necessary (see Appendix M, p. 85)

Visual environment also changed – which ‘affect[s] how and where [residents and workers] choose to travel and relax, both at home and outside the home, how they enjoy outdoor areas, and how much they identify with their environment. This relationship to environment

therefore has strong links to physical and psychological wellbeing.’ Measures to avoid, mitigate and manage amenity impacts are given as important for community health

Major amenity challenges will relate to ‘removal of existing vegetation and loss of resultant visual amenity’ and ‘properties overlooking construction compounds and work sites.’

There will be effects through changes in amenity on businesses, especially but not limited to ‘outdoor restaurants and cafes, hotels and pubs, childcare centres and aged care facilities’

‘...impacts on residences adjacent to the Pomeroy Street construction compound, Underwood Road tunnel and civil site and Concord Road civil and tunnel sites, would experience high visual impacts. Residents in Wattle Street, Walker Avenue, Ramsay Street, Martin Street and Dobroyd Parade would also experience high visual impact due to their proximity to multiple project elements’ (Appendix M, p. iv, see also Appendix M, p. 86)

Heritage of the local area will be greatly affected by the project (Appendix M, pp. 86-87):

Much of the western Concord precinct is part of the Powell’s Estate Heritage Conservation Area (HCA), 11 properties to be required are in this area and 2 are items of local significance (Canada Bay Council Local Environmental Plan 2013)—representing ‘a major adverse impact on the heritage significance of the Powell’s Estate HCA.’

53 residential properties to be acquired are part of the Haberfield Heritage Conservation Area, ‘the impact of the project on the heritage significance of the Haberfield HCA and individual heritage items would be significant.’

2 properties acquired in Chandos Street (Parramatta Road precinct) are heritage items on the Ashfield LEP 2013 and the historical importance of the Federation-era streetscape in which they exist would decrease due to their demolition

Changes to accessibility

Despite ‘14.2 Existing environment’ outlining that there is limited additional capacity for Parramatta Road given current congestion levels, the effects of a 2% increase in traffic on Parramatta Road due to construction road users is not considered an accessibility issue of the project

The construction force is also expected to increase traffic volume on surrounding local streets

The surface construction will impact on property access, pedestrian and cyclist movement, bus stop locations, local roads and intersections and travel times, with journeys affected by traffic delays and detours

Most heavy vehicles to access the construction facilities from roads including Parramatta Road, M4, Concord Road and Wattle Street

Local roads to be impacted temporarily during construction are (see Table 2.3 Appendix M, pp. 16-17 for more details): Pomeroy Street/Wentworth Road South intersection, Underwood Road, Sydney Street and Queen Lane, M4 east of Sydney Street off-ramp, Northcote Street, Ramsay Street, Martin Street, Walker Avenue, Chandos Street, Parramatta Road (between Orphington and Bland Streets) and Orphington Street. Also permanent alteration or closure to a number of streets (see Appendix M, pp. 17-18)

Additional accessibility issues include:

Short-term closures to the pedestrian bridge over the M4 at Pomeroy Street and the Bland Street pedestrian Bridge with 'short-term access issues'

Insufficient parking will be provided for construction staff, and given that 'the availability of on-street parking is a pressing local issue' a construction car parking strategy would be developed

Existing M4 cycleway to be closed between Haslams Creek (Newington) and Concord Road

Traffic delays will affect all road users (motorists, bus passengers, cyclists and pedestrians), impacts will include:

Slower buses, slower access to bus stops (4 stops relocated), reduced public transport reliability, reduced amenity for bus users

Reduced pedestrian safety (temporary closure of footpaths along Wattle Street, Martin Street, Parramatta Road and Chandos Street) and increased wait times at signalised intersections

Increased journey times and distances due to closed road shoulders and detours

Reduced overall amenity throughout the study area

Impacts on businesses reliant on deliveries

Longer journey times and decreased efficiencies for freight and commercial vehicles during construction

The need for some alternative access to local properties

No evaluation of these impacts is given against the 'Impact assessment rating criteria' as given in the Methodology section

Health of the community (MISSING IN CHAPTER 14):

‘worst case assessments without mitigation would likely generate health impacts for some receivers during some works. Loss of use of outdoor areas, disturbance of sleep, reduced capacity for concentration, with speech and other activities would be likely with potential for effects on cardiovascular health if elevated noise at particular locations occurred for extended periods.’ (Appendix M, p. 87)

‘Negative health impacts may occur as a result of traffic changes during construction, property acquisitions, visual changes, noise impacts and changes in access/cohesion of local areas. These may result in increased levels of stress and anxiety. Those most vulnerable to these changes are likely to be the elderly and people from non-English speaking backgrounds.’ (Appendix M, p. 87)

Changes to social infrastructure involves direct impacts on: (see Table 14.8, Chapter 14)

Strathfield Girl Guides Hall (acquired, all users temporarily relocated)

Bill Boyce Reserve (100% leased as a construction ancillary facility, closed to public for the entire project)

Arnotts Reserve (some area currently not accessible to public used during construction, though visual amenity reduced and noise and visual impacts on currently used Arnotts Reserve north of the M4)

Sydney Chiel Uniting Church (partial acquisition along the Concord Road frontage involving loss of greenspace, a playground, parking space and changed access—parking and greenspace areas of greatest concern for church community)

Cintra Park (acquired, currently a hockey field, to be relocated, increased travel times for people accessing Concord Oval and St Lukes Park due to a substantial increase in vehicles entering the Cintra Park compound via Gipps Street)

Reg Coady Reserve (directly impacted during construction, 18% of the reserve used during construction and 12% lost permanently, with adjacent parkland subject to noise, visual, and other amenity impacts)

Zongde Temple (acquired, 2,000 people served by it, inconvenienced as they are relocated)

Changes to social infrastructure will have ‘indirect impacts’ on the following:

(see Table 14.8 and Appendix M, pp. 76-81 for additional details)

Our Lady of Assumption Catholic Church; St Michael's Serbian Orthodox Church; Concord Baptist Church; St Andrew's Anglican Church; Jehovah's Witnesses Church; The Infants Home; Haberfield Public School; Willows Private Nursing Home; Haberfield Aged Care; Peek-A-Boo Early Learning Centre; Ashfield Park and Bowling Club and Yasmar Training Facility

Business impacts

'For the purpose of the EIA, an affected business has been defined as a business that would be impacted by property acquisition, changes in amenity, changes to accessibility or changes in the volume of passing trade due to the construction and operation of the project'

20 business buildings fully acquired (one motel, 4 offices, 9 auto sales / services, 1 personal services, 3 homewares, 2 retail)

Business impacts identified in Appendix N (p. 6-4) relate predominantly to:

- Increased noise and vibration due to plant and equipment or road traffic noise
- Changes in local air quality due to dust emissions
- Changes in visual amenity close to businesses

Specific business impacts will include (see Appendix N, p. 6-5)

- DFO (Homebush) carpark affected by dust, noise and visual amenity due to adjacent construction works
- Ashfield Bowling Club affected by dust levels, noise and visual amenity—especially on bowling greens, though these are located on the other side of the clubhouse to construction
- Businesses along Parramatta Road (such as commercial and car yards), along Powell Street and in the Bakehouse Quarter (North Strathfield) impacted by changes in amenity

Impact largely determinant on construction hours, length of construction, activity undertaken, proximity to project and nature of business

And also business impacts relating to accessibility (see Table 6.2 in Appendix N, pp. 6-7 to 6-9 for further details):

Increased congestion impacting delivery times, freight movement, customer travel times and destination decisions

Changes in parking availability

Changes in pedestrian or cycling arrangements affecting staff and customers

A car parking strategy will be developed and deliveries to / from businesses are not anticipated to be effected

Consultation led to the following business impacts or concerns being raised (from Table 5, Appendix N, p. 5.1), though note no specific consultation was undertaken for the EIA:

- Impacts to local business due to acquisition, disruption due to construction and changed conditions leading to business viability issues
- Impacts of noise, vibration, dust and air quality and construction traffic on businesses
 - ‘Potential impacts on access arrangements for commercial operations including deliveries and customer access by foot, bicycle and private vehicle.’
- ‘Potential impact on access for customers and deliveries due to construction traffic.’

Assessment of impacts during operation

This section assesses the impacts of the project during its operational life in ‘Chapter 14 Social and economic’, Appendix M (Social Impact Assessment) and Appendix N (Economic Impact Assessment).

Economic stimulus:EIS claims that operational expenditure and employment will add \$39 million to the NSW economy through increased industry output, \$9m through increased household income, 110 increased full time equivalent employment positions and \$18m in ‘value added’

Changes in amenity:Positive changes given as visual benefits and reduced noise due to less traffic along 96% of Parramatta Road and the M4

Negative aspects of surface works are given (with minimal detail) as loss of vegetation screening, new road infrastructure – interchanges, tunnel ramps, bridges/ flyovers and new noise walls, closer proximity to new road infrastructure for some properties, ancillary operation facilities such as ventilation facilities, the motorway control centre, electricity sub-stations and the water treatment facility, loss of heritage items and changes to streetscapes

4% of receivers used for noise testing found noticeable noise increases—in some cases ‘increased outdoor noise levels may result in increased levels of stress at individual properties’ (Appendix M, p. vi).Measures at certain properties will need to be taken

Given the above amenity points, important to consider that **‘changes to the amenity of a street or suburb can negatively impact the sense of belonging and identity of its residents and consequently their cohesion and connectedness. Areas with heritage value can also be a significant contributor to local character and community sense of place. Impacts on heritage assets affect not only the value of the assets, but the value communities place on the quality of their environment, and their connections to it, both past and present’** (Chapter 14, p. 25)

‘Businesses located along Parramatta Road, east of Concord Road and not located adjacent to

the eastern or western portal, would experience reduced noise levels, improved air quality and improved visual amenity due to the reduction in vehicle numbers, particularly heavy vehicles on Parramatta Road. Businesses located at the eastern and western portals and west of Concord Road are likely to experience increases in noise, reduced air quality and reduced visual amenity due to increased traffic volumes and the introduction of new infrastructure.’ (Chapter 14, p. 25)

Freight and efficiency

Full benefit predicted to be fully realised when/if other stages of WestConnex completed

Changes in passing trade

19% loss of output and full time employment for businesses along Parramatta Road due to reduced passing trade, equivalent to \$7.3 million output

‘This assessment does not take into account the potential increase in passing trade for businesses along Parramatta Road, west of Concord Road, from an increase in traffic volumes associated with drivers choosing to avoid the motorway tolls. Five businesses were identified as potentially benefitting from an increase in passing trade, comprising service stations, a car wash and cafes/restaurants.’

Changes to accessibility

‘...in the medium term, before the construction of the proposed future M4-M5 Link, congestion would increase in some areas, particularly on Parramatta Road east of the project’ (Appendix M, p. vi) — with construction traffic leading to a peak of 1,260 heavy and 920 light vehicles per day (Appendix N, p. 6-6)

Reductions in traffic delay between Homebush Bay Drive and City West Link and Haberfield/Leichardt, reduced traffic on Parramatta Road between the M4 and Dalhousie Street.

Worsened traffic conditions elsewhere, especially M4 project ramps at Parramatta Road and Dobroyd Parade.

Reliant on M4-M5 Link (subject to planning approval) to fix ‘much of this congestion’

Medium term traffic impacts on local and regional access to Parramatta Road, increasing travel times

Peak morning travel times reduced by just 6-8 minutes before construction of the M4-M5 Link, then if the Link is constructed time savings increase to 10-18 minutes (again, dependent on a separate project subject to planning approval)

The project might allow for the provision of a bus route through to Burwood from the CBD — **‘Improvements in public transport availability and efficiency would have broad social benefits. The use of public transport includes incidental exercise (eg walking to and from bus or train stops), increasing the chance of travellers meeting recommended daily physical activity targets. A more active lifestyle can help reduce the risk of preventable diseases,**

including coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, obesity and some cancers. It can also help improve mental health, community life, social wellbeing and community safety’ (Chapter 14, p. 27)

‘Parramatta Road is a major transport corridor that has multiple bus routes. The study area is also well serviced by the rail network with seven stations within walking distance of the construction sites.’ (Appendix M, p. 15)

Improved urban amenity and cycling infrastructure could attract more cyclists, but this assumes that amenity will increase (it will decrease at least during construction—see section 14.3.3) and that cycling infrastructure would be implemented in the future

Yet despite the ‘broad social benefits’ of public transport given above, ‘The project would modify pedestrian and cyclist access at the Concord Road interchange. Access would be most affected for residents and those moving between the north and north-east of the interchange and the south of the interchange, including the southbound bus stop on Concord Road. Travel distance would increase due to the need to travel around new project element such as the onramps. Together these changes would potentially reduce ease of access for public transport users travelling to/from the north and north east of the interchange, particularly in relation to accessing the bus stop which provides connections to Strathfield and Burwood. As walkable bus stop catchment areas is generally regarded as 400 metres, increasing walking distances beyond these could create a disincentive to public transport use.’

In terms of property access, Sydney Cheil Uniting Church’s historic entrance will be acquired, and changes made to the Sydney Street access, while apartments at 98 Chandos Street (Ashfield) will have access road relocated and offset

Visual and heritage impacts from operation of the project will include loss of vegetation screening, new road infrastructure, closer proximity to road infrastructure for some properties, the impact of ventilation facilities, the motorway control centre, electricity sub-stations, and a water treatment facility, and lost heritage items and changed streetscapes (Appendix M, pp. 92-93)

‘Changes to the amenity of a street or suburb can negatively impact the sense of belonging and identity of its residents and consequently their cohesion and connectedness. The heritage values of areas such as the Powells Estate in North Strathfield and Haberfield, are also a significant contributor to local character and community sense of place. Impacts to heritage assets affect not only the value of the assets, but the value communities place on the quality of their environment, and their connections to it, both past and present.’ (Appendix M, p. 93)

Social infrastructure that will be affected for the duration of the tunnel’s operation

Homebush precinct

Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church on Underwood Street; Homebush Strathfield Girl Guides Hall; Bill Boyce Reserve (returned following operation)
Powells Creek / Arnotts Reserve (Powells Creek overshadowed by on-ramp)

Concord precinct

Sydney Cheil Uniting Church (faces reduced visual amenity, increased noise, reduced parking, close to new tunnel, ramps and a noise wall)

Cintra Park precinct (operational aspects including smoke extraction facility, a water treatment facility and an electricity distribution substation, with 'minor' visual changes, construction car park available post-construction)

Wattle Street precinct (1,813m² of Reg Coady Reserve permanently lost, which 'is not considered to be a significant impact on the availability of open space in the local area' by WestConnex Development Authority)

Parramatta Road precinct

Zongde Temple permanently relocated

Effects on Haberfield Aged Care, Peek-A-Boo Early Learning Centre, Willows Private Nursing Home, Yasmar, Ashfield Park and Ashfield Bowling Club, all adjacent or near to the project site, are expected to be '**minor-moderate**' by WestConnex Development Authority, but no further details are given

Impacts on Human Health during operation

'Air quality impacts are of significant (community) concern with regard to this project... The project is expected to result in a redistribution of impacts associated with vehicle emissions' so that some areas will experience reduced pollution levels, while in others that experience higher surface traffic volumes 'a small increase in pollutant concentration may occur.' (Appendix M, p. 93)

Editor: This section merely restates what is in other reports. These statements are contested by critics

Impacts on business during operation

Concerns were raised about potential business impacts during operation of the project (see Table 5.1, Appendix N, p. 5-1) during consultations although note that no consultation was conducted specifically for the Economic Impact Assessment.

- Impacts of tolls costs on residents,
- Loss of trade due to reduced passing traffic, including impacts to advertising and ability to attract passing trade
- Acquisition effects on local businesses
- loss of amenity from proximity of tunnel entry / exit points, road widening and ventilation outlets to businesses'

Social impact report concludes: ‘Overall, it is anticipated that businesses located in the vicinity of interchanges may experience adverse amenity impacts due to the introduction of new infrastructure and changes in noise levels. However, some businesses located along Parramatta Road between Concord Road, Concord and Wattle Street, Ashfield, and away from the interchange sites will experience improvements in amenity due to the removal of a significant proportion of heavy vehicles along this section of Parramatta Road resulting in improved air quality, visual amenity and noise levels.’ (Appendix N, p. 7-5) (*Editor comment: This conclusion is dependent on accuracy of traffic predictions.*)

‘Worst case scenario’ modelling — \$7.3million and 33 full time equivalent jobs lost due to loss in passing trade, or 19% of total output of businesses reliant on passing trade—but based on estimates rather than actual calculations (Appendix N, p. 7-3)

Editor: Do readers think this is accurate?

Linkage or flow-on effects of impacts of these businesses shutting down are not considered [but are assumed ‘likely to be minor’ by WestConnex Development Authority]

Changes in accessibility due to changes in access arrangements for pedestrians, cyclists or vehicles

Cumulative impacts associated with other major infrastructure projects in the region, specifically the M4 Widening Project and the Parramatta Road Urban Transformation Program.’

‘Rat-running’ will be an outcome of the tolls imposed for the M4 – East project, whereby local streets are used by through-traffic to avoid toll ways.

‘The implementation of tolls on the M4 and M4 East to recover the capital costs of construction and the operating and maintenance costs of the projects will result in a number of motorists that are unwilling to pay the toll to divert onto Parramatta Road or other alternate routes. Commercial vehicles and freight operators using these roads can either pay the tolls and benefit from decreased travel time, increased efficiency and reductions in vehicle operating costs, or choose not to pay the toll and experience longer travel times.’ (Appendix N, p. 7-2)

Assessment of cumulative impacts

This section summarises the impacts’ cumulative effects on social and economic factors as identified in ‘Chapter 14 Social and Economic’, Appendix M (Social Impact Assessment) and Appendix N (Economic Impact Assessment).

Cumulative Impacts of Construction

Cumulative impacts most likely to occur according to WestConnex Development Authority will be because of concurrent construction activity (such as new M5 and M4 widening)—employment and economic stimulus opportunities, increased local employment opportunities, potential higher wages for construction workers, opportunity for local businesses to supply the goods and services

‘Construction of the project and M4 West (Parramatta to Homebush) would overlap, resulting in extended durations of construction impacts. At a local and regional level, for commuters, public transport users, pedestrians and cyclists, social impacts related to travel delays, diversions and inconvenience, exposure to visual and noise amenity impacts would be prolonged’ (Appendix M, p. 95), up to 5 years (Appendix N, p. 6-10)

‘Businesses and key centres located in the areas of overlap with the M4 Widening and the M4 East projects (particularly around the M4 and Homebush Bay Drive) are likely to experience traffic delays for customers and staff, extended periods of amenity impacts due to increases in noise, increases in dust levels and changes in visual amenity due to the construction of these projects. This is also likely to affect key centres such as Flemington Markets and the Sydney Olympic Park precinct. The M4-M5 link is scheduled for construction from 2019 to 2023; this project may also result in construction fatigue for businesses and road users in areas of overlap.’ (Appendix N, p. 6-9)

During cumulative construction, there could also be construction fatigue for users and motorists of the M4 due to the length of the project (4 years), increased travel times along Parramatta Road and M4 and impacts on freight movements

Cumulative impacts of operation

The only cumulative impacts of the operation of the M4 – East project that are provided are those that consider the wider WestConnex project and the Parramatta Road Urban Renewal Project, and all given are positive

The cumulative impacts listed here include a reduction in traffic along Parramatta Road (and the combination with the Parramatta Road Urban Transformation Program to improve amenity and accessibility), benefit to the freight link (again looking at the entire WestConnex project), urban renewal projects that will be possible because of the project (but that also require the Parramatta Road Urban Transformation Program/ another section of WestConnex to be completed), faster and more reliable public transport along Parramatta Road and increased active transport

‘Increases in traffic volumes are expected on Parramatta Road, between Concord Road and Homebush Bay Drive and on Parramatta Road east of Ashfield until 2023 when the M4-M5 Link is anticipated to open. This increase in traffic has the potential to impact on access to businesses along these sections of road due to increased congestion. The additional traffic and the resultant increase in congestion are not considered likely to have a significant impact on businesses along these sections of Parramatta Road.’ (Appendix N, p. 7-6)

Management of impacts

This section describes how impacts will be 'managed' through engagement and defined actions.

Ongoing stakeholder engagement

'Stakeholder and community involvement in program planning and ongoing environmental management would be key to avoiding, minimising and mitigating the social impacts of the project'

Editor: What is their record so far?

'The framework would ensure that local residents, businesses and workers are provided timely and clear information about local changes and the progress of construction and operation. Project communication would need to consider the cultural and linguistic diversity in the project area, so that project information is communicated effectively'

Editor: Emphasis added – what has been their record on this so far? There have been many community complaints about this

'The [community consultation] framework should also provide opportunities for local communities and specific key stakeholders, discussed in the social impact assessment, to have input into the development and refinement of construction management plans, and for the use and management of residual lands on operation. The -framework would also provide for community feedback or monitoring by telephone and online.' (Chapter 14, p. 30)

Editor: What has been experience so far of this?

Management of impacts specific to social or economic impacts

Construction phase (see Appendix M, pp. 96-98 and Appendix N, p. 7-9)

- Property acquisition (relevant legislation and documentation cited, relocation support services, WestConnex Assist counselling program continued, first language support promoted)

Editor: Have these things happened? If not should be spelled out in submissions

- Relocation (assistance is to be provided to those forced to relocate)

Editor: How effective is this? Does it exist?

- Access and connectivity (construction traffic management plans developed, community communication strategy to be developed, relocation of Orphington Street bus stop, advertising bus stop changes locally and signage applied for motorists, 'explore the options' for pedestrian and cyclist connectivity along M4, develop car parking strategy, and notify local stakeholders of traffic management procedures)

- Amenity – visual (local beautification and communication, consultation regarding public space use [residual land from construction], support of local community development activities)
- Amenity (noise and vibration actions given in Chapter 11, visual given in Chapter 13 and air quality in Chapter 9)
- Business impacts (acquire businesses under relevant legislation, business management plan developed, 24 hour project information line and website maintained to respond to business owners' concerns)
- Social infrastructure ('consultation' to continue to assist people to plan for and adapt to changes expected, emergency services will be notified of any traffic, access and route changes, alternative land will have to be found for the Cheil Church, Strathfield Council and Strathfield Girl Guides will be required to access temporary premises, Zongde Temple will need help finding both temporary and permanent site, Bill Boyce and Reg Coady reserves will have to be returned to at least pre-construction condition, consultation will be undertaken regarding respite periods for social infrastructure providers such as aged care and child care providers, Concord Oval and St Lukes Park users will be consulted)

During operation of M4E tunnel (see Appendix M, pp. 98-99 and Appendix N, p. 8-2)

- Access and connectivity (opportunities for pedestrian and cyclist accessibility explored, Transport for NSW consulted regarding improved pedestrian access at Concord Road Interchange with a focus on bus stops)
- Amenity – noise and vibration (long-term impacts addressed through community grants given to councils or local community groups)
- Amenity – visual (local beautification of operational facilities, community events, 'legacy projects' and tree planting)

Editor: What are legacy projects?

- Acquisition (carry out acquisition under relevant legislation)

One thought on “**Summary of M4EIS – Social and Economic Impact reports**”

1. **What do you think about Westconnex Aecom's EIS Social and Economic Impact report?**

I m4 eis says:

04/10/2015 at 5:35 pm [Edit](#)

[...] is still a lot of reading so the People's EIS has provided a summary of the Chapter in the main report and two large appendices with some page references back to the reports. Although they are hundreds of pages, the reports are repetitive, regurgitating [...]

Reply (<http://m4eis.org/2015/10/04/summary-of-m4eis-social-and-economic-impact-reports/?replytocom=56#respond>)

Blog at WordPress.com (https://wordpress.com/?ref=footer_blog). [The Big Brother Theme](https://wordpress.com/themes/big-brother/)
(<https://wordpress.com/themes/big-brother/>).

A People's M4 EIS

Dr Victor Storm – response to Westconnex M4 East EIS

[01/11/2015](#) [01/11/2015](#) [wendybaconblog](#) [Commentaries & Objections](#) ["Black Box" model](#), [AECOM](#), [Ashfield](#), [business case](#), [diesel trucks](#), [Dobroyd Parade](#), [Dr Victor Storm](#), [Haberfield](#), [health impacts](#), [NSW Register General](#), [Particulate Matter](#), [PM2.5](#), [Psychiatrist](#), [Respiratory illness](#), [Social and Economic Impact Assessment](#), [Urban Conservation Area](#), [Wattle Street](#).

Introduction

I write this from several perspectives. I am a resident of Haberfield and work locally. I am a registered medical practitioner with specialist qualifications in both child & adolescent and general psychiatry (FRANZCP) and public health medicine (FAFPHM). Additionally I am a graduate of Harvard University in public administration (MPA) and of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD).

This document summarises my objections to the recently published EIS for the M4East proposal. It concentrates on aspects of the health and social impact, including social & emotional wellbeing of residents as a consequence of the M4 East proposal. This along with linked projects, the M5 East duplication & the M4-5 link projects are the bulk of the 33 km long road & tunnel project, collectively known as WestConnex.

- General concerns about the flawed consultation and governance
- Initial impacts of the project to date
- Construction related impacts
- Post construction impacts
- Multiple unanswered questions or deficits in the current EIS

1. General concerns about the flawed consultation and governance

Individually and collectively these projects have already impacted on the social and economic life of residents and workers in the inner west, since the current proposal was first mooted in late 2013. In particular, the M4 East project impacts heavily on the residents and businesses around Homebush/North Strathfield & Concord and its Western end and Haberfield/ Ashfield & Croydon at its eastern end.

In addition the proposals for this project occur while there are other significant proposals that are affecting residents in the inner west.

- The first are the NSW Urban growth proposals for the Parramatta Road Corridor, with five of the eight proposed growth precincts within the inner west, coupled with the Bays precinct and the Central to Eveleigh project. Together these projects will have substantial influences on the character, built environment and population make-up of the inner west
- The second are proposals for forced amalgamations of local councils. Many residents are concerned that this will mean local affairs will be managed by large distant bureaucracies. There is a real sense that local decision-making and democracy is being removed from residents by this enforced process. There is also great frustration that decisions affecting the lives of people are being made by a government that has shown no interest in the impacts these decisions have on the lives of local people. There has been no attempt by the Premier nor relevant Government ministers to actually visit the sites of where residents are being forced from their homes. They have not justified why it is necessary to destroy vibrant communities. Nor have they proposed adequate mitigation of these impacts on the lives of individuals, families, friends and community.

I object to the proposal because it has not been presented in a way that enables the public to determine if the proposal is an appropriate and effective solution for Sydney's significant transport problems.

These combined sets of factors have left local residents feeling sad and angry about the process to date, and many feel sceptical about there being any real concern for their rights and welfare by the NSW and Federal Governments or their agencies.

In addition no comprehensive business case has been presented and the arguments in the 5000 page EIS are simplistic and lack depth. Critics such as the NSW Auditor-General and MLC Ms Mehreen Faruqi have seen the business case and have made strong arguments against why they consider it to be a flawed process and proposal. There has been no serious rebuttal from the proponents, which suggests that the critiques are accurate and that the whole process is flawed. If this was private company seeking to use shareholder funds, the lack of a publicly available business case would be disturbing for shareholders. With the M4 East project it is

public money that is being proposed for investment. The scheme proponents are keeping the public in the dark about their financing methods and the economic rationale for using public funds in the manner proposed.

I object to the fact that public money has been used to establish a private company, with 2 ministerial shareholders, so that the corporation does not have to be publicly accountable. The opportunity costs of this project and the alternatives that could be developed by equivalent investment have not been tested in public.

I object because the whole planning and tender is a corrupted process. The process has not been transparent and the proponents and financial beneficiaries of been intimately involved in the process of “evaluation” and marketing of the project to the public. There has been no independent analysis or arms-length review, such as a treasury gateway process. This is further evidenced by the awarding of contracts for the project, notice of compulsory acquisition of family homes and the planned destruction of local communities; all before the matter has been properly considered and approved. It is also evidenced by the unseemly haste in which the EIS has been prepared and the even further “haste” with which the community is expected to respond to a very large and multilayered set of documents.

I object that the EIS has in large part been prepared by AECOM, whose reputation for impartial independent advice must be in serious question. How can the public have any confidence in a company that has recently settled claims against it with a \$280 million settlement because of inaccurate traffic forecasting for the RiverCity tunnel project in Brisbane?

The most disturbing outcome of M4 East proposal, coupled with the other assaults on community rights and the ability of the public to engage in decision making about their city, is the further distrust about governance and probity in NSW. The planning and development process of the M4 East project smacks of back room deals hidden behind the cloak of “commercial-in- confidence concerns”, so that the public who pays for this are not truly involved in the decision making. This is a fundamental core of my objection to what appears is a flawed proposal.

2 Initial Impacts

I object to how this process has been managed, since its inception, including poorly run community “engagement”. The “consultations” appeared more concerned with the marketing and media spin, rather than provision of information. If we were watching an episode of the television series “Utopia”, the dark humour may be appreciated. However the cruel impact of decisions, made by people who do not have to live with the consequences, is very disturbing for those that suffer the consequences.

The initial announcement of this project was made in the last quarter of 2013. The WestConnex Delivery Authority (WDA) conducted a series of information sessions near the proposed concept route. At that time, many local residents and businesses received letters that their homes/ buildings would probably be resumed for the project.

These “consultation” sessions were characterised by what many residents in Homebush, Concord, Ashfield and Haberfield characterised as contradictory and misleading information. On multiple occasions attendees reported that they received contradictory answers to the same questions from different staff at the information booths.

There was considerable distress amongst older residents at the prospect of being forced from their homes to an unknown and uncertain future.

There was an immediate deflation on local real estate prices in the affected areas. Many property owners who have rental properties were not directly advised of the property resumption intention. Many discovered from tenants about the WDA property resumption plans. In some instances the owners discovered the resumption plans when their tenants gave sudden notice. Other long-term owners in Haberfield and Concord were pressured to sell their properties for low prices, by WDA/RMS agents.

Many businesses faced uncertainty about their prospects and found that trade reduced quite quickly through 2014. The proposed resumption and demolition of a family run motel on Parramatta Road will be significant loss for the district.

In mid 2015, a large number of residents who had lived for over 18 months with the apprehension of their homes were to be compulsorily acquired, were suddenly advised that their properties were no longer required. Others who had not had any such notice received letters stating their properties would be resumed. This occurred in Ashfield and Haberfield. The cumulative and individual impact of proposed resumptions in Haberfield and Ashfield is significant. There is no proper analysis of this in the EIS. Many core agencies have not been consulted prior to the EIS. Some schools, local chambers of commerce and local social infrastructure providers have only been consulted since the release of the EIS. Others have not been consulted at all. Hence, the social impact assessment is seriously deficient and inadequate.

- **Lack of analysis of the Socio-economic impact:** The EIS identifies the social impacts on individual finances, health and loss of equity caused by compulsory land acquisition. It also concludes that this disadvantages the sick, frail, elderly and poor. It also concludes that property owners who seek to find property in the district are also disadvantaged by the limited time available to find suitable property. The remedies offered in the EIS are limited and does little to identify how local residents can be properly supported. It appears to conclude that any social impact is just necessary collateral damage. There is no detailing of the socio-economic cost of these impacts. These need to be appropriately estimated and considered within a comprehensive social impact statement. **Those disadvantaged by the proposed measures must have appropriate financial restitution to compensate for current and future losses.**
- **Demolition of Apartments and social housing stock:** One impact particularly for Haberfield/ Ashfield and also Concord is the proposed demolition of many apartments and social housing blocks. Haberfield will lose over 50% of its apartment dwellings, many of which house long term residents who are single people, elderly and others with special disability needs. There is little if any equivalent stock available for them to purchase or rent nearby. Many of the people being forced out their homes will have to find a new home some distance away from their established communities, in which they have lived for years. Compulsory acquisition processes are already being implemented on local residents. Families, friends and neighbours are being separated. So while the impact is most

significant for the 400 or more people who are being forced to move, it also affects the thousands who remain behind in their once shared community. **Housing stock needs to be replaced and made locally available for people on low incomes.**

- **Supports for those affected by proposals:** The EIS suggests WestConnex would offer a counselling service to those impacted. This is somewhat akin to a person assaulting another and then offering counselling to the assaulted person! The only reasonable support to offer is independent financial, legal, counselling and social support to affected people. **There must be payment of full and appropriate sums to compensate for all imposed losses.**

Destruction of Urban Heritage in Historic Conservation Area: The heritage report identifies that many of historic houses that are slated for destruction are in Haberfield and Ashfield. It will result in a permanent scar on the historic fabric of the world's first garden suburb and also cut off the western corner of the suburb from the rest of this treasured precinct. The EIS states that this proposal will have a major adverse impact on Haberfield and the overall project will have a major cumulative impact on the Haberfield Conservation Area. It does not propose any mitigation or restitution for this loss. (Definition of Major Adverse Impact p 19-11, Table 19-4 EIS Section 1B: "Actions that would have a severe, long-term and possibly irreversible impact on a heritage item. Actions in this category would include partial or complete demolition of a heritage item or addition of new structures in its vicinity that destroy the visual setting of the item. These actions cannot be fully mitigated.")

- **Loss of Community:** The EIS itself says in 14.4.2, "Changes to the amenity of a street or suburb can negatively impact the sense of belonging and identity of its residents and consequently their cohesion and connectedness. Areas with heritage values can also be a significant contributor to local character and community sense of place. Impacts on heritage assets affect not only the value of the assets, but the value communities place on the quality of their environment, and their connections to it, both past and present." "These impacts are primarily along the M4 corridor in Homebush at the western and eastern ventilation facilities, Concord Road interchange, and Parramatta Road and Wattle Street interchanges." It describes that the impacts for Haberfield are "major adverse impacts" with the whole project having cumulative adverse impacts. **It proposes no solution or restitution for this impact. This is not acceptable.**
- **Ongoing implied forced acquisition of property prior to any official approval for the project:** in the last 3 weeks residents and businesses in Haberfield & Ashfield have received compulsory acquisition notices (PANS), which set a 90 day time frame for a negotiated settlement to be finalised, before legal proceedings would commence. Residents, who have lived their whole lives in the district, are being forced from their homes, often with what is considered inadequate funds to secure housing within the neighbourhood. Residents report that RMS staff are behaving in a forceful and what some consider a bullying manner towards them. They find it difficult to understand that as the EIS has just been released for community consultation, planned acquisitions are being forced through, prior to any formal approval and prior to any proper consideration of community submissions and concerns. Many believe the EIS process to be a sham formality. All property acquisition processes must cease until there is full release of the Business case to parliament and the public to allow appropriate analysis of the M4 East proposal and for transport alternatives

to be properly considered. This must include a full socio-economic impact analysis that accounts for the true costs of the project and does not hide the costs borne by individuals if the M4 East project were to proceed.



(<https://m4eis.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/posterinhaberfield.jpg>)

Poster in Haberfield Shopping Centre

3 Construction related impacts

The size of the project is huge with a reported 65 hectare (650,000 square metres) project footprint. This includes clearance of 13 hectares of vegetation and established tree cover. I object to the removal of established trees and vegetation for this project and in particular the proposed destruction of healthy iconic trees in the Reg Coady reserve.

- **Noise and Dust:** The EIS discusses a construction period of 3 years. It proposes a plan for 24 hour operations of heavy truck removal, with many places experiencing 20-40 heavy truck movements an hour 24 hours a day, as over 1.7 million cubic metres or some 16 million tonnes of spoil are removed. It is also proposed that trucks run up and down Wattle Street adjacent to residential areas where traffic is usually light between 9 pm & 6 am. I **object to the proposed 24 hour spoil removal by truck. There must be respite from this process, from 9pm to 7am.**

- All the trucks from Haberfield / Ashfield would congregate in Concord through Homebush and beyond for 24 hours a day, subjecting many people along that corridor to extended period of noise & dust. Current proposed mitigation measures for this cumulative impact is inadequate. **Appropriate noise mitigation through double glazing and sound proofing on individual homes is required. Trucks must be fully covered and all trucks should be washed, on the body of the truck and around the wheel bay & tyres, before entering road ways and distributing silica based dust. This will also require installation of high capacity dust filtration on air-conditioners. The capital and recurrent operating costs should be borne by WDA/SMC**
- **Vibration & potential damage to homes:** There is significant local resident concern on the impact of tunnelling beneath and around properties and the possibility of structural damage to old homes. The assessment of properties for which structural condition reports are provided needs to cover a greater area than is proposed in the EIS. There must be independent structural assessment of all houses in the region of the proposed tunnelling and blasting (within 200metres either side of the tunnels and construction areas). All damage must be compensated with full remediation.
- **Destruction to Neighbourhood and Community:** The grief and mourning caused by the forced breakup of family kinship and community ties will be long-lasting and inter-generational. **If the project proceeds a health monitoring study must start now and monitor the health and well-being of all local residents who remain and those displaced to ensure that health impacts are kept under close scrutiny.**



(<https://m4eis.files.wordpress.com/2015/11/haberfield-home.jpg>)

Health Impacts of Construction

I object to this project because a number of health impacts resulting from this project are not satisfactorily addressed in the EIS.

- Sleep Disturbance; if heavy truck movement is permitted on a 24 hour basis, it will disrupt sleep patterns for many local residents. Poor sleep is associated with a raft of health impacts, including increased blood pressure, increased cholesterol levels, impaired work performance, increased anxiety & depression, and relationship stress and breakdown. **There needs to be a truck operation and movement curfew between 9pm and 7 am, along with noise mitigation described above**
- Respiratory Irritation due dust: Spoil removal from tunnelling will increase dust locally and this will impact on general respiratory health, particularly for young infants and children and those with pre-existing heart & lung conditions. **There needs to be appropriate glazing and air filtration mitigation as proposed above. Trucks must be fully covered and all trucks should be washed, on the body of the truck and around the wheel**

bay & tyres, before entering road ways and distributing silica based dust. In addition round the clock monitoring of local air quality is required and residents should be alerted if dust levels are raised at certain times.

- Mourning & Grief over loss over home & community: This will be an enduring influence on many people, including those forcibly moved and those that remain. It will also increase the risk of both anxiety and depressive conditions. The loss of home and community attacks a basic need for all humans, to have stable shelter and accommodation. Many people believed that a home within the confines of the Heritage Conservation area would safe-guard them from such destruction and vandalism of their community as proposed by the M4 East project. **The lack of any proposed mitigation for this major impact is a serious deficiency in the EIS. It requires appropriate address and resolution. There should not be any progress on the project until this matter is satisfactorily addressed and appropriate restitution made to affected residents**
- Anxiety about impact on homes: The ongoing work, associated, with blasting, tunnelling and spoil removal will leave many remaining residents anxious about the security of their own homes, probable financial loss and reduced ability to care for themselves and their families' future
- Impact on Family life: The loss of close family and friends from an immediate neighbourhood diminishes the quality of life for many people. Increased isolation, particularly those who were in their own or rented flats will be associated with increased health morbidity. **It is most likely that the initiation of the project will hasten the death of many elderly residents if they are displaced from their long-standing homes and community. The lack of a clear and compassionate plan to deal with these major problems is a serious deficiency of the EIS.**

If the project proceeds a health monitoring study must start now and monitor the health and well-being of all local residents who remain and those displaced to ensure that health impacts are kept under close scrutiny. In particular the impacts on children need to be carefully monitored, particularly impairments on school education performance.

4 Post Construction Impacts

I object that even when the M4 East is completed, the traffic congestion impacts in the Haberfield/Ashfield localities will not have improved.

Once the project is completed in 2019, the Haberfield / Ashfield sector will remain significantly impacted as the increased induced traffic will funnel into 2 already crowded corridors, namely Parramatta Rd and Dobroyd Parade. Proposed new right hand turns at Ramsay Street & and Waratah St off Wattle Street will increase through traffic in what is a residential suburb. The EIS also notes in its cumulative impact section (26), that there would be greater traffic densities along both the Eastern sector of Parramatta Rd and Wattle St when the whole project is complete. This appears to contradict other assertions about the localised benefits. It also states in Section 26.4.2 that there would be significant increases in concentrations of pollutants in a

select number of sites, but does not specify where. **Detailed information is required about where the pollution impacts are predicted to be worse as consequence of this project and identification of what remedies or solutions are proposed. The project should not be approved to proceed until these matters are satisfactorily addressed.**

5 Unanswered Questions

I object to the current proposal because the EIS fails to satisfactorily address a number of significant concerns about ongoing health impacts:

- **Localised noise hot spots:** The redistribution of traffic and focussed portal entry & exits will cause concentrations of noise. In addition ventilation fans and exhaust stacks will create new noise sources that will require monitoring. Ambient noise will combine and effect the Haberfield/ Ashfield interchange and Concord interchange zones. **This information should be clearly spelled and readily identified and appropriate mitigation planned.**
- **Ongoing sleep disturbance:** The localised hot spots will contribute to ongoing sleep disturbance with health impacts that are known and documented.
- **Localised Pollution hotspots:** The Portal entry and exits will create localised pollution hot-spots. In addition until the project is complete, as described above there will be ongoing increased traffic in Parramatta road east of Bland Street, which will cause local problems. **Again detailed information of these impacts is required along with mitigation proposals.**
- The EIS does not provide data on PM2.5 pollution in localised areas, except from 24 hour averaged data. The WestConnex website provides data from June-August 2015 on 5 sites, but again only provides PM data on a 24 hour averaging basis. Peak levels during the morning and afternoon travel peaks on an hourly exposure basis are not made available. **The hour average data of PM2.5 exposure is required because this is when children and parents are often walking to school.**
- **Exhaust stack plume dispersal:** If we accept the assertion in the EIS that the exhaust ventilation tunnel will for the most part allow for reasonable distribution of pollutants away from the immediate vicinity, several issues of concern remain.
- **The first is what is the impact of intense localised plume strikes onto small areas, which will cause often short, but quite intense concentrations of pollutants in a restricted area, due to changes in wind patterns or atmospheric inversion layers?** These acute events can be a major trigger for acute asthma episodes or people with other chronic lung conditions.
- A second and related issue is that plume strikes will more frequently hit high rise buildings, so projected high rise apartments along the Parramatta Rd corridor, especially at Kings Bay, Burwood and Homebush, will be more likely to be affected than low rise housing. **What will be done to mitigate exposure to residents in the proposed high rise buildings under the Urban growth plans?**

- The third issue is, **do these pollutant plumes continue to contribute to the adverse air quality conditions in the SW of Sydney?** So is the claim of an improved local air quality in the inner west, done at the expense of a worsening of the air quality in the South West, due to the prevailing air movements?
- The EIS does not consider the impact of traffic growth along the Parramatta Road corridor following the proposed developments proposed by Urban growth for the corridor. How will air quality improve if traffic volumes build up due to increased population densities proposed for the corridor?
- **In Tunnel exposure to pollutants.** The EIS identifies the pollutant exposure for the Concord-Haberfield journey. However, there does not appear any recognition of cumulative exposure for people such as transport and taxi drivers, once all proposed tunnel projects are complete. If a person takes a return trip from Hornsby to the airport via NorthConnex & WestConnex, over half the journey by 2023 will be in a tunnel. So there would be some 40 or more minutes spent driving in a tunnel on a return trip. What will be the cumulative in-tunnel exposure from such a lengthy trip? Or if a taxi driver does this trip three times in a day, the exposure may even be longer; say a minimum of 120 minutes of in tunnel ambient exposure. **How would the cumulative impact accrue in terms of NO₂ or CO exposure. Would there need to be advisory information to limit in-tunnel exposure to less than 60 minutes per day?**
- **The lack of analysis about particulate matter pollution.** The EIS raises a number of contradictory issues about PM monitoring. The EIS argues that the NSW approved methods has no requirement to measure PM_{2.5}. In fact much of the analysis is done on standards promulgated in 1998, and probably on science that is over 30 years old! There have been huge advances in knowledge and measurement technologies, that this raised questions about claims that this project is being based on world's best practice. The air quality standards proposed in the EIS do not appear to match the proposed levels contained in the revised National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure, which would be equal to world's best practice (eg a 24 hour exposure to PM_{2.5} of 20 microgram/m³ instead of 25 microgram/m³). **The EIS should apply the proposed levels which are to be implemented across the country later this year, rather than the current out dated levels used in the EIS.**
- **How were vehicle exhaust predictions calculated?** Did the EIS calculate motor vehicle exhaust emission in tunnel based on the proposed mix of vehicles and the type of emission under varying operating conditions as supplied by vehicle manufacturers? **Were any of the calculations based on what we know to be false and misleading data from companies such as VW?**
- **We know that there is no safe limit to most exhaust emission exposure.** They contribute to both increased rates of cardio-vascular disease and lung conditions, including lung cancer, which is now increasing amongst non-smokers.
- **Diesel exhaust emissions are carcinogenic.** Modern Diesel exhaust consists mostly of particles sized PM_{0.5} and smaller (i.e less than 0.5 micrometer, at least one fifth smaller than PM_{2.5}). There is no measurement of the quantity of these particles which drivers will be exposed to in tunnels. These particles penetrate into the blood stream and long term effects are not well known. **It is not acceptable to state that the technology to measure**

these PM emissions is difficult and not required by NSW approved methods (section 9.2.4). The public needs to know what they will be exposed to in tunnel and via the tunnel exhaust vents. There are mitigating technologies that reduce in-tunnel and from tunnel exhaust ventilation stacks, by the use of electronic precipitators, which if designed from the start would work satisfactorily, as they do in Madrid and Hong Kong. Also carbon filtration can reduce Nitrous oxide build-up both in tunnel and from exhaust.

- Diesel vehicles may need to be banned from the tunnels and also from our urban environments.

IN SUMMARY

The EIS clearly outlines the enduring and destructive impact that the WestConnex project will have on the lives of people in select communities of the inner west. The loss of heritage items will be irreplaceable. The social connections and networks of families and friends will be disrupted. No meaningful mitigation is proposed. The central argument of the project proponents is that the perceived benefits will make Sydney a better place to live and work, so presumably, although it is not stated explicitly, the enforced sacrifices on several hundred thousand residents of the inner west justifies this outcome. The proponents do not give any real evidence to support their thesis and to date no business case, with all the socio-economic costs and benefits, has been made available. In fact it would appear that the proponents are pushing ahead with the project in spite of clear external critiques and with no logical rebuttal to the critics.

The so-called social impact analysis in the EIS is markedly deficient and requires to be re-done if it is to meet the requirements of the SEARS and what the community would expect.

The project has already had an impact on the health and wellbeing of local citizens. During construction further impacts are proposed, that if unmodified will have serious impact on local wellbeing, particularly the 24 hour heavy vehicle traffic and tunnelling work. Even when the M4 east is completed, local pollution and noise hot-spots will remain; East of Bland St and along City West link will be as congested as ever, with increased the capacity coming to a stuttering halt at those 2 choke points. Improved public transport plans for Parramatta road corridor are not even planned to be operational until 2031.

As outlined there remain too many unanswered questions about the health impacts. From a health and welfare perspective, this is a slow moving disaster for local affected communities. The disaster is easily avoidable and should be avoided by not proceeding headlong with this project. It is the wrong project at the wrong time for Sydney. Let us stand back, take a deep breath and work collaboratively, using proper planning principles, to design twenty-first century transport solutions for our communities and metropolis.

Create a free website or blog at WordPress.com (https://wordpress.com/?ref=footer_website).
The Big Brother Theme (<https://wordpress.com/themes/big-brother/>).

A People's M4 EIS

Submission by Sharon Laura of Haberfield

□ 31/10/2015 □ 31/10/2015 □ wendybaconblog □ Commentaries & Objections □ AECOM,
Ashfield, Bland Street, diesel trucks, Dobroyd Parade, Dobroyd Public School, EIS Consultation Period,
Haberfield, Haberfield Heritage, Haberfield Public School, Haberfield Westconnex Action Group, noise,
Parramatta Rd., Reg Coady Reserve, Social Impact Assessment, vibration

Few people know more about the impact of Westconnex than Haberfield resident Sharon Laura. Her home in Haberfield would be surrounded by massive construction sites should the M4 East be allowed to go ahead. Drawing on her long experience with social and health issues, Sharon has met, talked and provided support to hundreds of residents along the project route, including tenants and owners who are deeply distressed at having their homes taken off them with such short notice to leave. She is a spokesperson for the Haberfield Westconnex Action Group and has attended lots of EIS and information sessions where she has tried to get answers to her many questions. This is just part of her submission. Sub headings and some emphases have been added by People's EIS editor



(https://m4eis.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/12027510_1649793781934542_7040865712927164799_n.jpg)

Sharon Laura (sitting) at Stop Westconnex protest with neighbours. September, 2015

I write to submit in relation to the Environmental Impact Statement for the WestConnex M4 East project. I am opposed to both the M4 East project and all other proposed stages of WestConnex. I request a response to my concerns outlined in this submission. (20151030 SL Final Part A)

I am a resident of Haberfield, and live in community that is going to be greatly and adversely impacted by this project. My home is located within a residential Heritage Conservation Area. If this project goes ahead then I will be living inside a massive construction zone for a minimum of three years.

During the construction period, there will be severe impacts on my home, life and community during the building of a large tunnel ventilation and associated facilities site; two interchanges, and four separate civic construction areas. (These separate and distinct construction sites are the Wattle St road surface construction site, the Dobroyd Parade/Reg Coady road surface construction site, the Northcote St road surface construction site, and the Parramatta Rd road surface construction site.)

At the end of any construction, my home will be left standing 150 metres from the Parramatta Rd, Ashfield/Haberfield interchange; 300 metres from the Stage 1 and Sage 3 tunnel ventilation and associated tunnels operating site on Walker Avenue, Haberfield; and 600 metres from the City West Link, Haberfield interchange.

On a deeply personal level I object to all this disruption and loss for no good purpose or end result.

Westconnex won't meet stated aims or objectives

Overall, I object because:

WestConnex as proposed is not going to meet its stated aim of being the best transport solution for Sydney and is not going to solve our transport problems.

There has been no proper consideration of improved and integrated public transport as an alternative to WestConnex.

The EIS refers to the M4East providing a connection between the Blue Mountains and Sydney, yet there is no evidence there has been any information provided, or consultation with the residents or Council about the M4 East project and it's supposed need or benefit to those living or working in the Mountains.

The traffic modelling presented in the EIS does not add up, and the EIS figures show no long term or permanent improvements.

No business case for the project has been publicly released.

The planning process is ad hoc, corrupted and lacks transparency.

Contracts have been signed, approval assumed and work commenced prior to planning approval and any proper community engagement.

Failure in community consultation

There has been inadequate and conflicting information provided at EIS community sessions.

WestConnex community consultations have been lacking in real engagement and have been nothing but sham PR exercise.

I also strongly object to the project because the EIS display period and time for the public to submit has been too short and has significantly impacted on the community's ability to formulate a complete and detailed response to many concerns arising from the proposed M4 East project.

I object to statements by the proponents and supporters of the project that the community should 'trust' project development and planning process for the M4 East and support the project because it is in the 'best interests of the majority of the people'; and that necessarily 'some people will be inconvenienced or suffer some impacts.'

I object to the planning and development of the M4East proposal that has been seriously compromised by the involvement of AECOM in so many aspects of the project.

Construction site trucks to exit onto Bland Street

I object to the location of a construction site traffic exiting directly onto Bland St, Ashfield.

The Parramatta Rd interchange construction site vehicle exit onto Bland St, Ashfield will cause considerable and unacceptable noise, vibration pollution and traffic congestion in this location. Many people who live work and travel near the Bland St and Parramatta Rd intersection at Ashfield/Haberfield will be adversely impacted. I object to this loss of amenity.

The location of the Bland St construction site is on narrow road, very close to intersection lights. This construction exit will enter directly onto a traffic lane travelling in a north and south direction. Within a few metres past the proposed exit site, the north travelling lane expands into 2 lanes immediately before traffic lights. This is to enable north travelling traffic to turn right or left onto Parramatta Rd, or to travel straight across the intersection to immediately merge into 1 lane onto Bland St Haberfield. Also, construction vehicles entering Bland St, Ashfield and turning left onto Parramatta Rd to travel in a westerly direction will occupy the two turning lanes before the intersection.

The construction site exit will increase congestion along Bland St, Ashfield and Haberfield – a significant north/south and connecting road. It will be a very tight turn for construction vehicles turning left onto Parramatta Rd from Bland St.

Further, what is to stop construction vehicles turning right into Parramatta Rd, or even travelling straight ahead on Bland St, Haberfield as they try to avoid the inevitable traffic congestion in the area, or as they use this route as a de-facto 'marshalling' strategy as they await their turn and space to load up spoil, or to deliver goods and equipment in and out of the civil construction site. I object to this likelihood occurring during the construction period.

I object to the dangers likely to be caused by construction site traffic exiting onto Bland St, Ashfield to all road users and pedestrians passing through the Parramatta Rd intersection, and not only because of danger to school children and carers travelling to and from school.

Increase in Noise

I object to the increase of noise to be caused around the four construction sites in Haberfield and Ashfield. This cumulative increase of noise in our neighbourhood will cause a significant loss of amenity for all. In particular I object to the increased noise caused by construction vehicles exiting direct onto Bland St, Ashfield.

These construction vehicles will be heavily laden and will require revving in order to power up the incline towards the Parramatta Rd intersection. This will cause noise disturbance to all who live and work around the intersection. Because of the way noise travels, (increasing in volume and spread as it moves upwards) construction truck noise fwill also impact upon residents in Bland St, Haberfield, as well as upon the Haberfield Public School community.

Hundreds of polluting diesel trucks a day

I also object to the increase in localised pollution around construction sites. In particular around the Parramatta Rd construction exit onto Bland St, Ashfield by large numbers of diesel vehicles heavily laden, revving up or idling and thus spewing out the most dangerous pollutants. Pollutants which will

sit and hang low around the natural gully which surrounds the Parramatta Rd and Bland St intersection, and pollutants that may not disperse quickly or at all, – depending on the local weather conditions and volume of trucks using this location.



(<https://m4eis.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/haberfield-school-children.jpg>)

Anti-Westconnex after school protest on pedestrian bridge across
Parramatta Road, 2015

I object to the likelihood of local streets being used as 'marshalling areas' for trucks waiting to enter the construction site.

I object to the likelihood of local streets being used for parking by construction workers on the project.

Lack of detail in EIS

I object to the lack of detail in the EIS in relation to the planned mitigation to be offered to individual premises. (Noise, vibration, dust, smell, light and pollution.)

There is mention in the EIS of 300 homes to be offered various mitigation measures along the project route. (Volume 2E, page vi) But within the EIS I have found no details of the exact locations or premises to be offered such mitigation. And no WestConnex or CIMIC (Leightons) Joint Venture employee was willing to find out or share this information with me. I was repeatedly told that this information was private and confidential. I object to this lack of identification which is not for the benefit of the public.

In the EIS (Table 2.1 Indicative construction program overview, page 12, Vol 2E) three years of impacts has been given as likely for neighbourhoods surrounding the Wattle St interchange, the Parramatta Road interchange and the Eastern Ventilation facility (bordered by Walker Ave, Wattle St, Parramatta Rd and Allum St).

But I have found no specific mention of construction impacts on the neighbourhood around Parramatta Rd, between Northcote St and Wattle St, Haberfield. Only that this residential and commercial neighbourhood is identified as the 4th area to be impacted and is marked up as the C7 Northcote

Tunnel site (Figure 2.2 Overview of construction footprint and construction ancillary facilities, page 13, Volume 2E).

I object that the EIS does not identify, confirm or recommend specific mitigation for all the residents and businesses impacted by the four (4) construction zones in Haberfield and Ashfield around the:

- Parramatta Rd, Ashfield / Haberfield interchange site (on road surface and tunnel construction areas);
- City Link / Dobroyd Parade, Haberfield interchange site (on road surface and tunnel construction areas,);
- Wattle St and Walker Avenue (on road and tunnel construction areas);
- Northcote St and Parramatta Rd construction site (on road surface and tunnel construction areas).

There is reference in the EIS re noise and vibration impacts (page 85, Section 6.5.1, Volume 2E) that the Noise and Vibration Assessment has found that 'much of the project area is already exposed to high noise levels from existing traffic with many properties already exceeding noise limits. As a result, the Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment has identified 310 properties that may be eligible for treatments to mitigate primarily existing noise impacts.'

I object that these 310 specific properties and locations have not been identified within the EIS to allow residents to know whether their homes or business are to be offered mitigation for noise and vibrations impacts.

I have also found reference regarding amenity impacts in the EIS (page 92, Section 7.4.1, Volume 2E) stating that: 'There are 310 instances where noticeable noise increases could be experienced, primarily as a result of adjacent properties which had previously acted as noise barriers to these properties or where new noise road sources or traffic volumes increase.'

I object that these 310 properties and locations have not been identified within the EIS to allow residents or businesses to know whether their premises are to be offered mitigation for noise impacts during construction, or after completion of the project, due to adjacent properties being demolished for the project.

Also with reference to human health, (page 93, Section 7.4.3, Volume 2E) in relation to pollution the EIS states that: '... for a number of areas where traffic on the surface roads is expected to increase as a result of the project a small increase in pollutant concentration may occur.' Also, within the same assessment it is noted that: '...where property treatments are required to mitigate traffic noise, these measures are to protect people from adverse health impacts where they spend most of the day (i.e. indoors). These treatments assume that residents take up these measures and where they do, they keep external windows and doors shut and have minimal use of outdoor areas.'

I object that the EIS does not identify the location and properties know to be affected by an increase in pollution due to the project, yet the EIS assumes mitigating treatment will be provided and taken up by residents. But without specific identification of the location where pollution will increase, residents or businesses will not know if their premises require or are to be offered mitigation for increased pollution.

I object to the lack of information, or consideration within the EIS of the likely cumulative health and social impacts upon people who not only live within the project area, but who may both work, live and study within that same or different project area. The health and social impacts upon these people will be significantly greater than on others who spend less time within the project area.

I object that within the EIS, there is no reference or table that clearly lists or documents the total number of residents likely to be impacted by the project that also includes a break down and identification of single or combined impacts.

Project boundary too narrowly defined

I object that the project boundary and areas identified as affected is only 50 metres. The impact of this major road project will go far wider than 50 metres of the indicative route. By restricting the footprint of the projects impact to just 50 meters along the indicative route, the true number of properties and people adversely impacted is hidden, and the true costs of mitigation avoided. I object that much of the mitigating costs of the impacts of this project are to be borne by individual residents or businesses and not by the proponents.

Loss of vegetation, open space and trees

I object to the loss of any vegetation along the project route. Given that the route will go through a highly urbanised environment, any loss of vegetation, on either private or public land, constitutes an unacceptable loss and degradation.

I object that **this loss is proposed for no good purpose, as WestConnex is not a solution to Sydney's transport problem, and traffic modelling suggests that congestion will remain a problem in many areas after construction of the M4 East project.**

I object to the loss of any vegetation planted as part of the rehabilitation/landscaping works following the construction of the M4 motorway. I have often been forced to travel on the M4 between the Sydney and the Blue Mountains. Over many years, I have watched side vegetation grow and provide visual relief, shade and refuge. I object to watching this vegetation being torn down, especially as once upon a time, the construction of the M4 motorway was then supposed to be the answer to Sydney's east/west transport problems. I object that this existing motorway vegetation is seen to have no real value within the EIS.

I object to the impact upon the habitat of birds and animals which live, forage and shelter amongst the vegetation and trees to be lost due to the construction or operational needs of the project.

I object to the fact that the project will result in the know **removal of about 15.7 hectares of vegetation, comprising 12.9 hectares of planted trees and screening vegetation (mainly from alongside the M4) and about 2.8 hectares of grassland with scattered trees (such as from Cintra Park and Reg Coady Reserve).**

I object to the loss of open space available for passive recreation and enjoyment and loss of trees from the Reg Coady reserve. There is too little green space available for passive enjoyment these days. Any loss is an unacceptable loss. As our urban environment is built up and becomes more densely populated, there is an increasing need for green space available for passive enjoyment, not less.

I object to the loss of the 'scattered trees' within the Reg Coady reserve. Some of which are magnificent specimens and the home and staging posts for local birds. I object to the loss of cool, shade and shelter due canopy loss with the removal of trees in the reserve.



(https://m4eis.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/img_5731.jpeg)

Tree in Reg Coady Reserve would be destroyed if M4 East goes ahead

I object to public land (Council or State Government) being taken solely for the purpose of building a toll motorway that is not a solution to Sydney's transport problems. **I object to public land being seized to build a road that will force Sydneysiders into greater car dependency, induce more traffic into our city, and inevitably increase road congestion throughout all of Sydney.**

I object to the loss and threat to the Grey-headed Flying-fox, a vulnerable fauna species listed under the TSC Act and the EPBBC Act. The Grey-headed Flying Fox has been recorded with the project footprint.

I also object to the threat caused by the M4 East project to the threatened microbat species, such as the Eastern Bentwing Bat and the Large-footed Myotis. These are species that roost under bridges and culverts. Roosting bats, if present would be disrupted by construction activities. There is no suitable breeding habitat for these species within the construction footprint or adjoining areas. The project would also remove areas of foraging habitat (planted trees along roads and in parks) for the Eastern Bentwing Bat.

I object that the EIS recommends that a 'formal biodiversity offset is not considered necessary to compensate' for 'minor and localised residual impacts' of the M4East project. I believe that a formal biodiversity offset would be required.

I object that EIS does not recommend referral of the M4East project to the Australian Government Department of the Environment for further assessment or approval under the EPBC Act. I believe that the M4 East project, in all proposed stages, and because of its cumulative impact should be referred to the Australian Government under the EPBC Act.

Inadequate Social Impacts Assessment should be redone

I object to the validity of the Social Impacts Assessment (SIA) because baseline information and much of the research material used was not collected independently. I object that much of the material and information used as a basis for the GHD SIA had been collected and supplied to the SIA team by WestConnex Delivery Authority. I object to this lack of independence of the SIA from the proponent of the project.

I object to the project because of poor and limited methodology used in the compilation of the SIA. How meaningful is the identification of the true and complete social impacts of the M4 East project on the Haberfield and Ashfield communities, – and what chance of redress and mitigation given such bias and limitation in the development of the SIA? **I believe that the SIA must be redone, in order for the full social impacts of the project to identified and addressed.**

I object that much of the SIA work was done in preparation for the concept plan when the 'baseline' work was completed and before the preferred route was announced.

I object that there was no SIA consultation with Ashfield Council after initial discussions around the concept plan phase, and not in direct relation to the preferred and indicative route released in 2015. I strongly object to this serious omission, as the route and the impacts of the M4East project changed significantly from those associated with the concept phase announced in 2013.

I object that after the community 'consultation' re the 2013 concept plan there was no direct engagement with residents in the development of the SIA for the EIS of the preferred route released in 2015.

I object that only residents whose homes were notified of acquisition in 2013 and 2015 were considered 'consulted' in relation to the SIA for the EIS.

I object to how little knowledge or information about Haberfield and Ashfield Social Infrastructure Providers (SIPs) is revealed or referred to in the SIA of the EIS.

I object that Dobroyd Public School, St Joan of Arc Primary School, Ella Community centre and outreach programs, the Ella residential care facility, Ella childcare, and another child care centre in Ramsay St, Haberfield were omitted from direct consultation in the development the SIA.

I object that these important local services were not consulted in relation to the SIA, because they were considered outside the area affected by the route and project area.

I object that only SIPs located directly along the route and very close to it were regarded as within the project area to be considered for the SIA. I object that many other social infrastructure providers from Homebush to Haberfield must also have been excluded for consideration and consultation in preparation of the M4East EIS. I object because it is most likely that there will be many other aged, child and community centres and services that will have been overlooked in the EIS.

Important social impact neglected because considered outside the project

I object to the lack of consideration of by the SIA of the considerable impact on residents, schools and community caused by local street changes required due to a new right hand turn into Waratah St,

Haberfield. I understand that these impacts were omitted from the SIA, because they were seen as being outside the project area required to be considered by the SIA.

I object to the complete omission within the SIA and consideration of resulting social impacts from proposed traffic changes and restrictions at the intersection of City West Link with Timbrell Avenue and Mortley Avenue, Haberfield. I understand that these impacts were omitted from the SIA, because they were seen as being outside the project area required to be considered by the SIA.

I object to the lack of attention by the SIA of the impacts on residents in Ashfield & Haberfield caused by trucks exiting into Bland St, Ashfield, from a construction site in the middle of a densely populated area.

I object to the SIA of the EIS (<http://m4eis.org/2015/10/04/summary-of-m4eis-social-and-economic-impact-reports/>) because it is a poor and inadequate report[, insulting to all of us who live in Haberfield and Ashfield.

Failure to consult with businesses

I object that only 'consultation' undertaken for the Economics Impact Assessment with commercial property owners and business operators along Parramatta Rd, was after the concept design was released, and then only in relation to acquisitions proposed on the Haberfield side of Parramatta Rd, between Alt St and Rogers Avenue.

I object that some businesses on the Haberfield side of Parramatta Rd were initially being pressured to negotiate and settle on a 'voluntary' acquisition price before any planning approval for the project. I object that other businesses to be left standing were desperately seeking and not receiving information and support from WDA and RMS after the concept route was released.

I object that there are businesses along Parramatta Rd, Haberfield that have been left in limbo land for the past 2 years, and are unlikely to receive adequate compensation for business losses that occurred during the post concept and preferred route phase.

I object to current acquisition of property and the loss of businesses on the Ashfield side of Parramatta Rd.

I object that businesses, remaining in situ on Parramatta Rd that have already suffered considerable disruption and business loss, believe they will continue to lose more money and business in the next phases of the M4 East project.

I object to the lack of any real consultation between WDA/JV consortia and businesses in Haberfield and along Parramatta Rd (Haberfield and Ashfield).

I object because the WDA/JV 'teams' have no real knowledge or understanding of the Haberfield village, businesses or community. Whilst there was some acknowledgment of the likely chaos and impacts to be caused by the M4East project, the only compensation or sympathy offered by the WDA/JV 'team members' was that all the workers would be buying their coffees and lunches in Haberfield during construction.

I object to the fact that the Economic Impact Assessment 'consultation' has only been around specific issues related to the acquisition of individual commercial premises and businesses

Insufficient time to respond

I object that that EIS response period has been truncated into a very short period. The document itself is not easy to digest and contains many internal contradictions. I object that we have inadequate time to highlight all its inadequacies. I look forward your response.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Sharon Laura

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Big Brother Theme (<https://wordpress.com/themes/big-brother/>).

A People's M4 EIS

Westconnex comes to Underwood Road Homebush – Aurelia's story

[14/10/2015](#) [25/10/2015](#) [wendybaconblog](#) [Commentaries & Objections](#) [Aurelia Roper-Tyler](#), [Forced acquisition](#), [Homebush](#), [Noise mitigation](#), [Property valuations](#), [Underwood Road](#), [Westconnex counselling](#)

By Wendy Bacon and Nicole Gooch

(The People's EIS interviewed Aurelia Roper-Tyler on October 12. Aurelia's story is just one of thousands across the 33 kilometre Westconnex route. Her story adds some depth that is entirely missing from the EIS Social Impact study. Indeed the GHD consultants who did the social impact study (<http://m4eis.org/2015/10/04/summary-of-m4eis-social-and-economic-impact-reports/>) did not interview affected residents for their report. You can draw on individual stories for your submission or tell your own story. The People's M4 EIS welcomes contributions.)

Aurelia lives in Underwood Road, Homebush. Underwood Rd is the site of the proposed tunnel entrance and ventilation stack for the Westconnex. If the project is approved, houses would be demolished and residents left behind would experience increased traffic, pollution and noise impacts above safe levels. Lots of the vegetation that softens their urban environment would be stripped away.

The first Aurelia ever heard about the Westconnex M4 East tunnel was when her father-in-law rang her in December 2013 after he saw it on the evening TV news.

The next thing she knew a local paper was on her doorstep asking her if the house was going to be knocked down. Aurelia soon realised that her home was frighteningly close to the tunnel entrance.

She rang Strathfield Council who in turn suggested she ring the Westconnex Delivery Authority (WDA). They told her that her home may or may not be acquired and directed her to the WDA's website. Aurelia says it had "pretty pictures but we really didn't get much information from it".

The WDA then went into "damage control" and assigned the family a "liaison officer", who appeared to know very little, and who later left with no hand-over to the next person. Earlier this year, WDA declined to meet with the family at all. Finally in July, Aurelia received a letter confirming that the house would be acquired.

The family's roots go back in Homebush for decades. Her husband's family moved into the area in 1973 and can remember the stressful, noisy and disruptive construction of the M4 that cut a swathe through their community.

Aurelia and her husband moved into the Californian bungalow with its big backyard a decade ago just before their twin boys were born. One reason for the move was so that they could be nearer family. They decided they would like to stay and poured their life-savings into renovating their home. It had been barely a month since the end of the renovations when news of the Westconnex broke.



<https://m4eis.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/our-home.jpg>

The Roper-Tyler home in Underwood Rd

At that stage, the boys were attending their local Catholic school just a short distance down the street. When they first heard of the Westconnex, the family was distressed – they had not desire to move or for the property to be acquired. Aurelia begun attending information sessions on the Westconnex and says that, “after looking at the detailed maps, it hit me that we need to get out of here”.

“I realized there was going to be a ventilation stack right behind our house, (in the latest plans it has now changed to be in the front) and the entrance to the tunnel was going to be a hundred metres from our front door.”

“I am a huge believer in global warming, and pollution, and I thought, we can’t live here. They gave us a timeline of construction (several years), and I realised there were going to be lots and lots of issues with the constructions that were happening here. So I felt we needed to move.”

By then the neighbours had received acquisition letters, but she hadn’t. Her home would be left, the last house standing, next to a laneway. “We were going to be this little house left on its own, with a three lane tunnel entrance on the other side. It was a really, really, difficult situation, because we were wanting to sell, but we couldn’t as nobody would buy.”

Like many others left in the dark by the WDA, Aurelia and her family then went through a long period of anxiety and depression from stress not knowing what was going to happen. Aurelia felt she was “in limbo land”, which was made worse by the fact that WDA didn’t seem to know either what was happening.

Finally, half way through this year the chosen route was made public and Westconnex told her they would acquire her house. She’s happy now that a decision has been made and they no longer have to deal with constant uncertainty, but the thought of losing their home and suburb still fills her with grief. The disruption to an “already busy family life” was also difficult.

“We are already busy with schooling, family and our own careers, and then you have this additional, absolutely unforeseen pressure, and it is huge.”

Westconnex originally offered \$400,000 less than their own valuation for the house. Aurelia and her husband stood their ground but worry that many wouldn’t have the capacity to do the same. She knows some who were panicked by the whole situation and just took anything they were offered. She worries about what happens to the more vulnerable.

The family will soon move to an apartment nearer the CBD. The boys were awarded a scholarship to attend St Mary’s Cathedral School in the city. Aurelia will however have to travel much further to her work in Concord.

One of her frustrations is that many people want to believe Westconnex’s line that the tollway will solve local traffic congestion. (Even the Westconnex EIS doesn’t pretend that this would occur so they are going to be disappointed).

Aurelia describes her neighbourhood as having very strong ties. The children all ride their bikes up and down the streets and people look after each other. Aurelia and another friend take it in turns checking in everyday on, their 96-year-old neighbour, but now everyone in the street is leaving except him, and he is very stressed about that. “It’s killing our neighbour, he has already had three falls because he is so worried about it. Everyday he comes around to our house to ask when are we leaving.”



(<https://m4eis.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/richard.jpg>)

Aurelia's 96 year old neighbour Richard reading EcoTransit Sydney newspaper

Overall, Aurelia, who works as a social worker in the mental health field, found WDA to be "unhelpful". She is dismissive of the free counselling offered by the WDA to help deal with the loss of their house.

"Free counseling from a person that is actually causing you grief. It's ironic. You're the perpetrator, I'm the victim, you are giving me free counseling so I can deal with your behavior. I think it's ridiculous."

Her husband Jeremy's grandmother lived in Short St in Homebush, 40 years ago when the M4 came through. It cut her off from the rest of the family on the other side of the road. Before that, she could walk across Short St. to the Church, the pharmacy, the shopping centre and her family. Back then the neighbourhood had the qualities of what planners today call 'liveability'.

Then Short St got cut off and she had to make her way all around across around the motorway until she couldn't anymore when she was in her 80s.

"20 years later we are doing exactly the same thing, with promises of a wonderful new road."

There are hundreds of residents living in the Underwood Rd area of Homebush. The project has not yet been approved but if it is, those left behind are going to experience a dramatic deterioration in their living conditions. There will be 24 hours tunnelling for several years during which trucks will remove thousands of truckloads of spoil. A small park and its picnic tables were removed months ago, long before the EIS was even lodged. When the tunnel is open, the noise will still be above acceptable limits for some of those occupying buildings called 'sensitive receivers'. Some will receive noise treatment (this depends on a range of factors including cost; final decisions are not made until construction is well underway). The EIS does not recommend noise mitigation for residents living above the first floor in apartments. The local Catholic Church Our Lady of the Assumption (<https://sites.google.com/a/syd.catholic.edu.au/olanorthstrathfield/our-parish>) will experience 'high' impacts.



https://m4eis.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/homebush-ventilation-stack-img_3001.jpg

Site of proposed ventilation stack

Aurelia told us that while she objects to the way WDA has gone about the destruction of her community, she might have been prepared to accept some damage if the overall project was worthwhile. But having examined more closely the Westconnex claim that it will vastly improve the situation for those affected by paralysing traffic congestion in Sydney, she found the evidence did not stack up. She then became a key campaigner <https://www.facebook.com/NoWestconnex/posts/510459599096453> for her local area. For that and many other reasons, she will be putting in a submission **objecting** to the M4EIS proposal.



(<https://m4eis.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/underwood-road.jpg>)

The People's EIS will be publishing more individual stories soon. Here's [a submission from Haberfield](http://m4eis.org/2015/10/06/a-response-to-westconnex-m4-east-proposal-an-objection-from-a-haberfield-resident/) written by an anonymous resident (<http://m4eis.org/2015/10/06/a-response-to-westconnex-m4-east-proposal-an-objection-from-a-haberfield-resident/>).

3 thoughts on “Westconnex comes to Underwood Road Homebush – Aurelia’s story”

1. **aurelia** says:
[14/10/2015 at 5:05 pm](#) [Edit](#)

Thanks for giving me a voice Wendy & Nicole.....Cheers and hope people read it.

[Reply \(http://m4eis.org/2015/10/14/westconnex-comes-to-underwood-road-homebush-aurelias-story/?replytocom=113#respond\)](http://m4eis.org/2015/10/14/westconnex-comes-to-underwood-road-homebush-aurelias-story/?replytocom=113#respond)

2. **wendybaconblog** says:
[14/10/2015 at 7:50 pm](#) [Edit](#)

Thanks for sharing your story Aurelia. As you would know often people can relate more easily to a simple account of how an individual will be affected than hundreds of page of data that describe buildings affected by noise as 'sensitive receivers'. There is nothing wrong with that term but it does tend to neutralise the impact.

[Reply \(http://m4eis.org/2015/10/14/westconnex-comes-to-underwood-road-homebush-aurelias-story/?replytocom=115#respond\)](http://m4eis.org/2015/10/14/westconnex-comes-to-underwood-road-homebush-aurelias-story/?replytocom=115#respond)

3. **Sharon Laura** says:
[21/10/2015 at 7:01 am](#) [Edit](#)

Aurelia, thanks for the courage in going public. I hope that your story, giving 'voice and life' to a person whose home is being acquired by WestConnex will give courage to others in a similar situation.

I hope those who are currently in the process of trying to negotiate just terms for the loss of their homes are not panicked into accepting what is first on offer by WestConnex/RMS. That they negotiate hard like Aurelia to get the best deal – and not leave their current home until they have found a suitable replacement for the home and community they are losing.

In Haberfield and Ashfield, there are owners and tenants, who have received their PANs (notice to settle on agreed price, either as an owner or tenant), and who are being hassled to leave their homes before Christmas. Many have no idea of where they will re-locate. Some, who may have been offered a 'good price', say that even with this, they cannot afford to purchase or rent back in Haberfield or Ashfield. So much for 'just compensation' and a just process of acquisition. Money provides no 'just compensation', when a person or family is forced out of their community against their will, and in an such and untimely manner. Why should anyone leave until they are ready and have got something decent to move into?

It is important that residents share their stories, and don't try to negotiate in silence and alone. Thanks again Aurelia for speaking up.

[Reply \(http://m4eis.org/2015/10/14/westconnex-comes-to-underwood-road-homebush-aurelias-story/?replytocom=159#respond\)](http://m4eis.org/2015/10/14/westconnex-comes-to-underwood-road-homebush-aurelias-story/?replytocom=159#respond)

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A People's M4 EIS

This is the story of Kevin – one of many older residents hit hard by Westconnex

□ [28/10/2015](#) □ [28/10/2015](#) □ [wendybaconblog](#) □ [Commentaries & Objections](#) □
[GHD](#), [Haberfield](#), [Kevin's story](#), [Older residents](#), [property acquisition](#)
By Wendy Bacon and Nicole Gooch

This is the second in our series that feature individual stories. This post tells the story of Kevin and Ann, two residents of Homebush who are in their eighties.

The People's EIS has already published [Aurelia's story from Homebush](#) (<http://m4eis.org/2015/10/14/westconnex-comes-to-underwood-road-homebush-aurelias-story/>). We interviewed Aurelia because she could speak directly about the experience of having her home compulsorily acquired by WestConnex. But she is also a social worker and is concerned about the stress and social disruption caused by the WestConnex project even before it is approved.

It's not just the people who are forced out who are affected by WestConnex. Aurelia told us about Richard her 96-year-old neighbour in Homebush whose house has not been purchased. She and her neighbour keep in touch with him regularly. Everyone is leaving except him: "It's killing our neighbour, he has already had three falls because he is so worried about it. Everyday he comes around to our house to ask when are we leaving."

WestConnex was required to include a social impact study in the EIS. This is [Appendix](#) (<http://m4eis.org/2015/09/17/m4-east-eis-volume-2e-app-m-part-1-social-impact-2/>) M. The NSW Planning Department required that this section of the EIS should report on the impact of the M4 East on communities from planning through to operation of the WestConnex. GHD was hired to work alongside AECOM to produce the social impact study. According to its website, GHD is a global services company that operates in the "markets of water, energy and resources, environment, property and buildings, and transportation." It provides, "engineering, architecture, environmental and construction services to private and public sector clients." It is not a specialist in social impact studies.

People's EIS caught up with GHD consultant Anne Mithieux at a Strathfield EIS exhibition session in September. She explained to us that GHD did not interview any people whose houses were being acquired directly which probably explains why her impact study contained

very little detail and described the stress and disruption that is already occurring along the M4 route as if it was a future event. She saw her task as recommending mitigation for the impacts of a project that was going to happen. (This is the sort of attitude that is fueling critics' apprehension that the Planning process is a set up.) She was not uncaring but is not very familiar with the area she was studying. She seemed a little surprised about the intensity of the impacts that were already happening.

Two weeks ago, the ABC interviewed Arthur Alibrandi (<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-10-18/residents-rally-against-home-acquisitions-for-westconnex-project/6864268>) who told the ABC News that his 82-year-old father, Joe who has lived in his unit for nearly 50 years, had been offered an amount by WestConnex that would make it "physically impossible" for his elderly father to stay in the area.

In response, Premier Baird told the ABC, "At times, there has to be a provision for the majority, there are difficulties for some people as part of that... We're doing everything we can in terms of compensation, looking after them, provide provision for a new home."

This statement reveals a similar detachment and apparent lack of knowledge on the part of the Premier. According to the SMH, Slater and Gordon Lawyers, who are representing about 70 property owners affected by WestConnex compulsory acquisitions have found that offers are 20-50 per cent below what clients' properties are worth. This means that residents quite unexpectedly are not only losing their homes but feel they have lost control over where they can live altogether.

Since we published Aurelia's story, Aurelia and the People's EIS have begun to hear stories of more people who are being forced out of their homes.

Kevin : another story from Underwood Road

Kevin and Ann (not their real names) are both in their eighties. Five years ago, they moved to Homebush, a community along the M4 route that will be hit hard by the WestConnex.

Initially, Kevin wasn't bothered by the WestConnex because according to earlier plans, it would have bypassed his home. But in June this year, he was told WestConnex would compulsorily acquire his home and he and Ann must move out by April. As anyone who lives in Sydney would know, nine months is not nearly enough time to unexpectedly sell and find another home.

When Kevin and Ann moved into their home five years ago, they expected to stay there for the rest of their lives. They had specifically chosen the house because it had no stairs, was walking distance to the train station and shops, and in a quiet street.

When interviewed for the People's EIS this week, Kevin said,

"I am very unhappy about the WestConnex. I can't find anywhere to replace my house. I am very old, in my 80s, so I thought the place where we are living at the moment, is our home. But I can't find anything to replace the house that is near the station and the grocery shops. There

were a few houses on the market, but they are too expensive. There is no way to get one of those houses, with the money I get from our house.”

“They’re going to acquisition it, they’re going to buy it by force.”

The situation is “very stressful. Particularly for aged people like me.” He describes the search for a replacement as a “nightmare” that may have “shortened my life expectancy”.

He laughed when asked if WestConnex had been helpful. “No. Just one way instructions.”

“WestConnex is not helping to find a new house. It did a valuation and that’s it. The amount from WestConnex may be fair, but I can’t find anything to replace the house with the money from WestConnex.”



https://m4eis.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/img_3543.jpg

96 year old resident Ray Harrison lives close to what could become a massive construction site for the tunnel exit and ventilation stack. He has been regularly protesting on the streets of Haberfield

WestConnex GHD report warns of serious risks to residents, especially vulnerable ones

The GHD report did find that the acquisition process could carry 'significant social risks' (Appendix M, p. 96)... including 'inaccessibility of equivalent housing at a comparable cost... relocation health risks...[and] altered access to social infrastructure' as well as potential housing stress due to higher rent or house costs. It is 'expected that the majority of owner-occupiers would aim to relocate within the local area', and effects may be compounded by the timeframe of just 9 months for some households to be relocated, market volatility and reduced housing stock available to relocate into (Appendix M, p. 68).

It also noted that the "stress and anxiety" could lead to "impacts on health, well-being and quality of life, which have been worsened by the uncertainty and the changing footprint of the project with some dwellings originally to be acquired now not, and some originally not impacted now required for the project (Appendix M, p. 68)."

It found that the impacts would likely impact vulnerable households but that even less vulnerable households would be affected as "land acquisition would increase property demand in the local area with some households with only nine months to identify alternate properties". (Actually it is less than nine months for Kevin as some property owners have been told they must be out of their houses by April next year.)

"Overall it is anticipated that the social impacts of relocating for many of the directly affected households would be **major short-term impacts**. In some cases, where households are unable to relocate locally, the social impact may involve an extended recovery time to re-establish social networks and daily routines for work, study and recreation. Alternatively, where households need to incur higher levels of debt in order to remain in the local area, increased mortgage or rental stress may result in greater and longer term social impacts."

Short term impacts are defined as between 1 and 3 years. (Appendix M p. 23). Major impacts are substantial ones that the report states could be mitigated, although it does not explain how this might happen after residents are forced out, which is in the process of happening at the moment. So for older people this could be very serious. The stress and forced relocation could shorten their lives, particularly for those who do not have strong family support networks.

Given the lack of any in depth or direct investigation by GHD, it is disturbing that the consultant repeats and appears to accept the word of WestConnex at face value. On page 87, GDA reports:

WDA is also providing an independent service to vulnerable households (e.g. elderly, those suffering an illness) to help assist with their relocation. This service aims to provide assistance with tasks such as finding a new property (either to rent or purchase), arranging removalists, disconnection of services (electricity, gas etc.), attending appointments with solicitors and other tasks associated with relocating. With nine per cent of people in the region over the age of 70 years and 4.6 per cent needing assistance for their daily needs, this support will be imperative to mitigating relocation disruption.

On the basis of this statement, the report concludes that "minimising dislocation of affected households from their existing socio-economic networks is a key consideration in avoiding social risks to those affected by property acquisition."

GHD report out of touch with residents' experiences

While the WDA statement quoted in the GHD report does represent the official version of what is happening, it doesn't represent what residents would have told the consultant had they been asked. The problem is that with five months to go until they empty their homes and move to new houses, residents such as Kevin claim that support is simply not there.

WestConnex Action Group Haberfield spokesperson Sharon Laura told the People's EIS, "I hope those who are currently in the process of trying to negotiate just terms for the loss of their homes are not panicked into accepting what is first on offer by WestConnex/RMS." She recommended that residents negotiate hard like Aurelia (<http://m4eis.org/2015/10/14/westconnex-comes-to-underwood-road-homebush-aurelias-story/>) to get the best deal – and not leave their current home until they have found a suitable replacement for the home and community they are losing.

"In Haberfield and Ashfield, there are owners and tenants, who have received their PANs (notice to settle on agreed price, either as an owner or tenant), and who are being hassled to leave their homes before Christmas. Many have no idea of where they will re-locate. Some, who may have been offered a 'good price', say that even with this, they cannot afford to purchase or rent back in Haberfield or Ashfield. So much for 'just compensation' and a just process of acquisition. Money provides no 'just compensation', when a person or family is forced out of their community against their will, and in an such and untimely manner. Why should anyone leave until they are ready and have got something decent to move into?"

The WestConnex Action Group rejected Baird's assurances that the government is doing all it can to support people and called for a halt to forced acquisitions.



(<https://m4eis.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/richard.jpg>)

Aurelia's 96 year old neighbour Richard reading EcoTransit Sydney newspaper

There are also serious impacts for residents living in aged care facilities and for tenants who may find it impossible to find or afford comparable accommodation in Sydney.

(Also read: <http://m4eis.org/2015/10/06/a-response-to-westconnex-m4-east-proposal-an-objection-from-a-haberfield-resident/> (<http://m4eis.org/2015/10/06/a-response-to-westconnex-m4-east-proposal-an-objection-from-a-haberfield-resident/>))

How to make an objection:

<http://m4eis.org/2015/09/11/how-to-object/> (<http://m4eis.org/2015/09/11/how-to-object/>)

One thought on “**This is the story of Kevin – one of many older residents hit hard by Westconnex**”

1. **aurelia** says:
[29/10/2015 at 6:38 am](#) [Edit](#)

Thanks to your write up 2 weeks ago. I had numerous people call me and knock on my door to talk about their various stories. Its sad and upsetting that the most vulnerable people in our community the frail aged are put through such trauma in their later years. Most of them just want to live a peaceful life, enjoy their local community and die at home. With the new age belief in cars and motor ways....the frail aged are going to suffer the most. They don't drive....!!!! being the biggest issue and the lack of public transport makes them prisoners in their own home. It stretches their already busy families and strains the struggling aged care sector.....!!!! And the end result the individual feels like a burden to society they becoming depressed and giving up on life....I'm sure this project will cause premature deaths of many older people along its path and its sad that this has not had a mention in the ESI.

[Reply \(http://m4eis.org/2015/10/28/this-is-the-story-of-kevin-one-of-many-older-residents-hit-hard-by-westconnex/?replytocom=261#respond\)](http://m4eis.org/2015/10/28/this-is-the-story-of-kevin-one-of-many-older-residents-hit-hard-by-westconnex/?replytocom=261#respond)

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A People's M4 EIS

Case study : Why won't RMS pay Kim Sun market value for his home?

[□ 29/10/201530/10/2015](#) [□ wendybaconblog](#) [□ Commentaries & Objections](#) [□ Kim Sun, Mike Baird, North Strathfield, property acquisition, Roads and Maritime Services, Westconnex Free Counselling Service, Young St.](#)
Interview by Nicole Gooch

For many, working to own your own home is an important part of life in Sydney, although it is increasingly unlikely for younger residents due to rising house prices. People work hard to meet expectations. The least they expect is that when it comes to the ownership of their home, they will be treated fairly.

In an earlier post, we discussed the impact of losing your home on older residents and the fears of those who would be left behind about what it would be like to live in the middle of a huge construction site for months, or even years. The picture emerging is far from what Premier Mike Baird called "doing everything we can in terms of compensation, looking after them, provide provision for a new home" or the low key distanced tone of the Westconnex GHD Social Impact study (<http://m4eis.org/2015/10/28/this-is-the-story-of-kevin-one-of-many-older-residents-hit-hard-by-westconnex/>)

But you don't have to be old to be severely affected by the threat of losing your home for less than its value, especially when all the stress you're experiencing leads you to call Westconnex's so called free counselling service and they don't ring back.

This is the story of Kim Sun whose home at 21 Young Street will be smashed for Westconnex.

For the past few months, Kim Sun has spent almost every weekend attending auctions and open home inspections in and around North Strathfield. He is desperate and stressed as house prices are way above what he can afford.

The thing is, Kim and his wife already own a lovely home in North Strathfield, which they have renovated bit by bit since buying it in 2006. They've added insulation, solar power and a water tank as they expected to stay in it a lot longer. Their six year old son rides his scooter with his dad to the local school and his grandmother lives a 5 minutes drive away in same suburb.

But in November 2013, Kim received a letter from the WestConnex Delivery Authority (WDA), informing him his house was to be acquired to make way for the motorway. It was the first he'd ever heard of the WestConnex. The family must now vacate by March next year, but Kim says WestConnex will only buy their house at nearly \$200,000 less than market value.

"The price Roads and Maritime Services offer means we can only buy a home very substandard to the one we are living in. And time is running out. " says Kim.

"It's not right. It should be market value. That's what they say they are offering, and it's not. They are not doing the right thing by people. Considering the project is going to cost \$15.4 billion, and they need our place, and they are stressing us out, why put on that extra pressure of offering below market value."



<https://m4eis.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/kims-house5.jpg>

WestCONnex/RMS has offered Kim Sun well under market value for his home

"It's a difficult situation too for me because my wife doesn't work, she looks after my son and the house. I am the only one working, so it makes it a bit difficult having to borrow extra money to find a place, so we can stay within the area, with what they are offering."

Kim says it's the same for everybody on their street: "We all seem to have a problem with getting the market value."

He knows others who have had to move to the Central Coast after their house was acquired, but that's not an option for the Sun family. "I don't want to change schools for my son, he likes it there, and mum is close by. I don't want to go somewhere else," says Kim, who catches a train from North Strathfield station or Strathfield station into work at Town Hall. "We were hoping to stay here a long time, which is why we set the house up comfortably."

The past two years of negotiations and uncertainty have taken their toll. Kim is struggling with stress and is on antidepressants. It's a situation made worse by a lack of communication from the WDA. "I've tried to call WestConnex myself, but they don't return calls," says Kim, who has kept a log of these calls, having been assigned a 'job number' for each. He feels "extremely disappointed and stressed" with the way WDA has treated his family.

In July this year Kim called WestConnex wanting to know by when exactly the house had to be emptied, and also asked about accessing the free counselling service on offer. His call was never returned.

A young family, work and an ailing mother already make for a busy life, and Kim says the last thing he needed on top of it all is to be "kicked out of my home in such a short space of time now".

Asked by the People's M4EIS what he thought of Premier Baird's comment about needing to make provision for the majority, Kim says: "If I was losing my house to public transport I'd probably feel less hurt by it. I don't think the WestConnex is going to solve our problems. For me public transport would be the way to go first. And I thought 'market value' was market value. I don't see why we have to negotiate so hard with them."

Final negotiations between Kim and RMS took place two days ago. Kim refused to accept the RMS offer of \$1.445 million, the same offer as the one made in August. "That offer is way below my valuer's market value of \$1.65mil," says Kim. "We will be going to the Valuer General."

(Ed: If you want to know more about Social Impacts of Westconnex, [this submission](http://m4eis.org/2015/10/06/a-response-to-westconnex-m4-east-proposal-an-objection-from-a-haberfield-resident/) (<http://m4eis.org/2015/10/06/a-response-to-westconnex-m4-east-proposal-an-objection-from-a-haberfield-resident/>) from a resident in Haberfield is very helpful)

3 thoughts on "Case study : Why won't RMS pay Kim Sun market value for his home?"

1. [**justsoundstories**](#) says:
[29/10/2015 at 10:23 pm](#) [Edit](#)

Thanks for sharing Kim's story. The WDA are disgraceful and many hundreds of families are in a similar situation.

We need to demand an immediate enquiry or Royal Commission into this whole project.

A People's M4 EIS

Case study: Willows Nursing Home

[28/10/2015](#) [29/10/2015](#) [wendybaconblog](#) [Commentaries & Objections](#) [Aged Care Facilities, Parramatta Rd., Sass Imbari, Willows Nursing Home](#)

Aged Care Facilities – Case Study Willows Nursing Home

By Nicole Gooch and Wendy Bacon

According to the GHD EIS Social Impact report, at least five aged care facilities including hundreds of beds lie near the path of the M4 East.

Residents of aged care facilities or their families try to choose the best environment for their final home. High on their list of physical priorities are peace and quiet, a bright outlook and easy access for visitors.

Aged care facilities are both a home for residents and a business. While the EIS economic impact statement did not conduct any consultations with other businesses, 'social infrastructure' organisations such as churches, schools and health care facilities were asked for feedback and nearly all told Westconnex of their concerns.

The Willows Nursing Home was no exception. The GHD report records its many objections including noise, pollution and dust and anxiety about how visitors and staff would access the home both during construction and afterwards.

This is because if the M4 East was to proceed along the planned route, Willows Nursing Home would literally be in the middle of a construction zone and later next to the tunnel exit and unfiltered ventilation stack.

People's EIS interview with Sass Inbari.

Sass Inbari has owned Willows Private Nursing Home on Orpington Road, in Ashfield, since 1977. It was his father's before that and Sass built it up from 27 beds to 40. The home provides high care support to its elderly residents, and welcomes visitors from 8.00 am to 8.00 pm daily.

The Westconnex GHD social impact study notes that as a high care residential facility "the impacts of vibration and noise could be detrimental to health and wellbeing of residents."

Sass is concerned about the noise and dust occasioned by the demolition of the buildings immediately behind and next to the nursing home. Later there would be more disruption when this emptied space would be occupied as a construction site for the motorway and a parking lot for hundreds of large diesel trucks that will move in and out of the site each day.

The residents at the Nursing Home are frail and vulnerable. Staff are also upset and it will be a major inconvenience with road closures and works for relatives coming to visit, ambulances, delivery etc.

Bus stops on Parramatta Road are going to be moved, which means it will be harder for relatives to visit the residents.

Sass first heard about the Westconnex motorway on the news like everyone else, then about 3 or 4 months ago he got a visit from Westconnex representatives to discuss his concerns. "They took it all on board but I have not heard from them since," says Sass.

He wants compensation because of the impacts of the construction and of the operation of the motorway, and he is worried he is going to lose business.

He is angry too as he says he doesn't "know what good the Westconnex is going to do. All it will do is just shift the bottle neck towards the city."

He doesn't think people realise what impact the motorway will have.

All the other businesses around him, on Paramatta Road, have been purchased. Sass doesn't wish to be purchased, only compensated. He is stressed and frustrated as he feels there is nothing he can do to change the situation.

Submissions to the EIS close on November 2. Here is how you can make a submission

<http://m4eis.org/2015/09/11/how-to-object/> (<http://m4eis.org/2015/09/11/how-to-object/>)

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[The Big Brother Theme \(https://wordpress.com/themes/big-brother/\)](https://wordpress.com/themes/big-brother/).

[Reply \(http://m4eis.org/2015/10/29/case-study-why-wont-rms-pay-kim-sun-market-value-for-home/?replytocom=269#respond\)](http://m4eis.org/2015/10/29/case-study-why-wont-rms-pay-kim-sun-market-value-for-home/?replytocom=269#respond)

2. **wendybaconblog** says:
[30/10/2015 at 3:51 pm](#) [Edit](#)

I agree justsoundstories The more people find out about this project the more they are concerned about the failure to follow fair and proper procedures. There are ways of calling for a Royal Commission or public inquiry such as a online petition or letters to Premier Mike Baird. Newtown Greens MP tabled a petition with 10,000 signatures calling for a halt to the Westconnex project. This will be debated in parliament on November 19. Do you follow Westconnex Action Group facebook? It will keep you in touch with events

<https://www.facebook.com/westconnexactiongroup/?fref=ts>
[\(https://www.facebook.com/westconnexactiongroup/?fref=ts\)](https://www.facebook.com/westconnexactiongroup/?fref=ts)

Thanks for posting on the People's EIS site

[Reply \(http://m4eis.org/2015/10/29/case-study-why-wont-rms-pay-kim-sun-market-value-for-home/?replytocom=281#respond\)](http://m4eis.org/2015/10/29/case-study-why-wont-rms-pay-kim-sun-market-value-for-home/?replytocom=281#respond)

3. **Sofia** says:
[31/10/2015 at 11:07 pm](#) [Edit](#)

My parents are about to loose their commercial property. They too are in negotiations with RMS for market value. They are also offering them and all the small business owners in our area (that they are acquiring) a value way below market value.

RMS are taking two approaches for business owners.

Where there is a lease in place it is a restriction and it makes the property less valuable.

Where there is no lease in place (even if the business has been there for a number of years) there is no business security and the business is valued at almost nothing. Then they value the property at a lower rate as well without a registered tenant.

I do not understand why we need to have continuous negotiations to prove the market value of our property. They should pay people whose lives they are ruining so that they can relocate and get on with their lives. We all want to stay in the local area, they should pay fair compensation for the area and stop low values on all the property.

[Reply \(http://m4eis.org/2015/10/29/case-study-why-wont-rms-pay-kim-sun-market-value-for-home/?replytocom=311#respond\)](http://m4eis.org/2015/10/29/case-study-why-wont-rms-pay-kim-sun-market-value-for-home/?replytocom=311#respond)

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The Big Brother Theme (<https://wordpress.com/themes/big-brother/>).

A People's M4 EIS

Serious flaws in Social and Economic Impact study

[02/11/201502/11/2015](#) [wendybaconblog](#) [Commentaries & Objections](#) [AECOM, Ashfield Council, community consultation, GHD, Social Impacts. Economic Impacts, Willows Nursing Home](#)

(The People's EIS has already published a number of individual stories that demonstrate the severe social impact of the proposed project. We have suggested that the GHD Social and Economic Impact study that was prepared in conjunction with AECOM is inadequate. These reports were contained in Appendices M and N and were combined into a single chapter in the main report.)

The reports find major short term impacts would be experienced in Haberfield, Homebush and elsewhere. Here is a [summary of the reports \(http://m4eis.org/2015/10/04/summary-of-m4eis-social-and-economic-impact-reports/\)](http://m4eis.org/2015/10/04/summary-of-m4eis-social-and-economic-impact-reports/).

The consultant recommends mitigation for a number of potential impacts but overall the report fails to convey the seriousness and significance of impacts, some of which are already occurring.

This post presents some additional reasons why the social and economic impact reports are inadequate.

- a lot of the work for these reports was done in 2014 when the proposal was for a different route than the one finally chosen by the Westconnex Delivery Authority. This work consisted of a desktop collection of official socio-economic and demographic data and consultations with Councils and social infrastructure organisations. The report appears to have suffered from insufficient time or resources to adjust to the route announced in 2015. Despite the devastating impact of the preferred route on Haberfield and Ashfield, the consultant did not update the consultations with Ashfield Council and so the reports failed to convey the significance or seriousness of the impact of the removal of homes and loss of heritage in the Haberfield area. Most of the report consists of basic data with little analysis.
- in the process of rushing to adjust to the new route, the consultant ignored potential impacts on some organisations such as the Dobroyd Point Primary school.

- because she was not in touch with the area and had limited time, the consultant was not aware when she wrote the report of the extent of dislocation that is already being experienced by many people being forced to move from their homes. She recommends mitigation measures such as counselling support for people experiencing stress from forced relocation are quotes Westconnex as stating that this support now exists. The consultant appears to accept and restate Westconnex's official version of their policies but 6 residents have reported to the People's EIS that they have not received support from Westconnex. While more research is needed and it could be true that some residents are more satisfied than others, there is enough evidence to show that WDA assurances on mitigation measures cannot be taken at face value. The consultant also recommends further support as if social impacts due to forced acquisition would occur in the future when in reality they are already happening now. This is one of the ways in which the GHD study lacks sufficient independence from the WDA.

Framework for analysis not applied

The report sets up a three way methodological framework for analysis in space, time and strength of impact (Chapter 14. Section 3) but barely refers to it again in the report. When asked about this the consultant said that in making her decisions and recommendations, she exercised her “professional judgement.” The approach is not transparent and is superficial. This is worrying when one considers that the consultant did not do any field work. This explains the very distanced tone of the report. There are few case studies or examples provided of impacts on the community.

It is difficult (including in the SIA and EIA appendices) to see how the methodology was used.

For instance,

- how does the Economic Impact Assessment come to the finding that, ‘Overall, the assessment has concluded that the positive impacts on businesses and the economic benefits of the project are expected to outweigh any negative impacts that cannot be satisfactorily mitigated’ (Appendix N, p. 9–1)?
- The social impacts of transport infrastructure, prior to analysis (given in the methodology section), are considered to be ‘property acquisition, community networks and amenity’ (Chapter 14, p. 2), an insufficient starting point for a project of this scope and impact.
- ‘City of Sydney Council LGA is outside the project footprint and would be indirectly affected’—at this scale transport infrastructure would be expected to affect traffic flows and the central city of the region in which it is implemented. The indirect impacts are not explored.

The methodology section also refers to extra social research that was conducted in addition to the desktop review. No bibliography was included for this and there is no indication in the report about this social research.

Case studies from failed projects

The Social Impact assessment uses social impact studies of earlier failed tollway projects as case studies without explaining that they failed. In these cases, social impact studies found that despite likely negative social impacts, the tollways were justified. It is surprising that AECOM which is currently being sued by investors in the Clem7 for negligent traffic modelling would put forward its social impact assessment as a useful case study. The intended purpose of the case studies is not clear. It appears to be 'padding'.

The social impact study states there will be impacts without investigating their costs and depth. Simply listing social infrastructure within the study region cannot be defined as social impact assessment—nowhere (either in Chapter 14 or in the Social Impact Assessment) is there a systematic review of each piece of (social) infrastructure against a best-practice framework to determine whether it will be affected and, if so, the extent to which it will be. It is not sufficient to merely record the concerns of organisations such as occurred in the case of the Willows Nursing Home (<http://m4eis.org/2015/10/28/case-study-willows-nursing-home/>).

Minimal Stakeholder and Community Involvement:

- there were no direct consultations conducted with local businesses for the economic impact report. This would appear to be a major gap in the collection of data.
- When evaluated against the international IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum (<https://www.iap2.org.au/resources/iap2s-public-participation-spectrum>) the 'community involvement' centres around 'informing' (the lowest stage on the spectrum with the least impact on decisions) and only rarely could be considered 'consultative' (the second lowest). There have been many complaints about the whole consultation process and slow and vague information provision. This is relevant to the entire planning process but is particularly concerning in relation to the social impact assessment because the consultant openly acknowledges that she did not directly consult with anyone in 2015 preferring to pass questions through Westconnex communications staff who were also promoting the project, dealing with media inquiries, managing EIS sessions and communicating with people who were being forced to move. This compromised the independence of the SIA and EIA reports. It also explains why the feedback tables provided in the report are out of date and do not take account of the impacts of the new route.

On page 95 of Appendix M, the consultant states that a preconstruction consultation framework would be developed,

The framework would ensure that local residents, businesses and workers are provided timely and clear information in regard to local changes and progression of project construction and operation. Project communication would consider the cultural and linguistic diversity in the project local study area in communicating project information effectively in community languages (i.e. through translation, use of interpreters, specific language broadcast services and cultural organisations).

This recommendation is well-meaning but is hard to take seriously when there have been constant complaints about the nature of the consultation and communication provided.

Minimal mention of health and heritage impacts

While seemingly significant heritage effects are identified in Appendix M as well as concerns raised by local councils regarding this, the only mention in the main document's Chapter 14 Social and economic comes briefly under 'Section 14.4.2 Changes in amenity' ('loss of heritage items and changes to streetscapes') and concerns brought up during community consultation (Section 14.1.4).

Health impacts are mentioned in Appendix M (p. 87) as 'worst case assessments without mitigation would likely generate health impacts for some receivers during some works'. These are not elaborated.

Chapter 14. Mentions of 'health' are otherwise limited to issues raised during community consultation (section 14.1.4), under construction impacts and operational impacts as 'Health of the community' (though no further information is given), and in broad terms (such as 'Relocation health risks' or 'important for community health').

Given community health concerns (and those raised during consultation with the public and councils), this issue needs to be better addressed to ensure the appropriate 'mitigation' measures as mentioned are followed.

Inadequate Economic Impact Assessment

The EIA (Appendix N) is not based on a sound business case or cost-benefit analysis, thus limiting detail and the accuracy of any findings made. For instance there is no consideration of negative, direct or indirect effects to the 'wider state economy' (Appendix N, p. 6–1), despite consideration of several positive indirect or cumulative effects.

For the purpose of the EIA, an affected business has been defined as a 'business that would be impacted by property acquisition, changes in amenity, changes to accessibility or changes in the volume of passing trade due to the construction and operation of the project'—though a figure for the actual total number of businesses these changes affect is not provided in the EIS.

The geographical scope was wider (including the wider state economy) for the EIA (Appendix N) than the SIA (Appendix M) but this is not explained in Chapter 14 Social and Economic where analysis takes places seemingly simultaneously between social and economic impacts, at differing scales. This is extremely confusing.

In 'Chapter 14 Social and Economic', Appendix M and Appendix N, cumulative benefits are given preference – such as overall travel time improvements to 2031 once all project sections are complete, while cumulative negative impacts of the overall project are largely overlooked.

If cumulative negative aspects were considered, the opportunity cost of not spending \$15.4 billion on a more efficient transportation system (or any public asset) could be evaluated (if the benefits are considered for the whole project at a NSW scale, so too should the negative aspects). Instead, the EIA is by its own admission predominantly 'a qualitative assessment of the impacts' (Appendix N, p. 3–4), despite its use of economic multipliers as a quantitative measure.

Relationship to other technical reports

The consultant claims to have reviewed all the other technical reports but since most of these were not ready until shortly before submission, the review is unlikely to have been an in-depth one. Any deficiencies in these reports -e.g. the noise report – would have implications for the social and economic impacts of the proposed project and be an additional reason to review the findings in these reports.

Lack of Independence from commercial interests

There are independent social researchers both in universities and elsewhere who could have done a high quality social and economic assessment including a cost benefit analysis of the M4 East proposal. GHD is in a number of infrastructure markets (<http://www.ghd.com/global/markets/>). These markets do not include social infrastructure or research. This raises questions about whether there is sufficient protection of the public interest in the planning process.

(Wendy Bacon, Anthony McClosker and Nicole Gooch have contributed to this post)

For other reports relevant to Social and Economic Impacts read:

Summary of Social and Economic Impacts: <http://m4eis.org/2015/10/04/summary-of-m4eis-social-and-economic-impact-reports/> (<http://m4eis.org/2015/10/04/summary-of-m4eis-social-and-economic-impact-reports/>)

Dr Victor Storm : <http://m4eis.org/2015/11/01/dr-victor-storm-response-to-westconnex-m4-east-eis/> (<http://m4eis.org/2015/11/01/dr-victor-storm-response-to-westconnex-m4-east-eis/>)

Sharon Laura: <http://m4eis.org/2015/10/31/submission-by-sharon-laura-of-haberfield/> (<http://m4eis.org/2015/10/31/submission-by-sharon-laura-of-haberfield/>)

Aurelia's Story: <http://m4eis.org/2015/10/14/westconnex-comes-to-underwood-road-homebush-aurelias-story/> (<http://m4eis.org/2015/10/14/westconnex-comes-to-underwood-road-homebush-aurelias-story/>)

Kim Sun's story: <http://m4eis.org/2015/10/29/case-study-why-wont-rms-pay-kim-sun-market-value-for-home/> (<http://m4eis.org/2015/10/29/case-study-why-wont-rms-pay-kim-sun-market-value-for-home/>)

Kevin's Story: <http://m4eis.org/2015/10/28/this-is-the-story-of-kevin-one-of-many-older-residents-hit-hard-by-westconnex/> (<http://m4eis.org/2015/10/28/this-is-the-story-of-kevin-one-of-many-older-residents-hit-hard-by-westconnex/>)

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A People's M4 EIS

Note explaining Automobile dependence, peak car use and induced traffic

[30/09/201525/10/2015](#) [wendybaconblog](#) [Commentaries & Objections](#) [Car Dependence](#), [Induced traffic](#), [Marchetti Constant](#), [Peak car](#)

Automobile Dependence

The situation where our choices and ability to move around the city are constrained by our access to a car, and where 'use of an automobile [becomes] not so much a choice but a necessity' (Newman & Kenworthy, 1999, p. 32).

Good sources for more information on automobile dependence's causes and implications for cities are Newman and Kenworthy's (1989) book *Cities and automobile dependence* and the website <http://www.vtpi.org/tdm/tdm100.htm> (<http://www.vtpi.org/tdm/tdm100.htm>).

Peak car use

Though most cities around the world have demonstrated some level of car dependence over the last fifty-plus years, growth in car use in Australia and other developed countries peaked in 2004 and is now decreasing in a trend known as 'peak car use' (Newman & Kenworthy, 2015). As both a cause and result of this trend is the fact that cities are no longer being planned solely around the automobile (Newman & Kenworthy, 2015, p. 5). Newman and Kenworthy (2011, pp. 33-37) discuss six potential causes for this trend:

People are generally willing to 'budget' for one hour of travel per day

The 'Marchetti constant' (Marchetti, 1994; Newman & Kenworthy, 1999) suggests that when our cities become 'one hour wide' (Newman & Kenworthy, 2011), or about 50km wide given average car speeds of 50km/h, further expansion beyond this limit becomes less attractive and

traffic becomes a problem within these limits, because the time we are generally willing to spend travelling each day is exceeded. Thus, we see cities slow in their expansion, public transport becomes an attractive way to avoid traffic, and locations closer to destinations become preferable.

Public transport is increasing in popularity

This trend is due to a number of reasons, not least the high cost of owning and running a car, and preferences for people, especially younger generations, to use their commute times to do other things than drive (for instance reading and using their devices for any range of activities).

The reversal of urban sprawl

Densities in cities are increasing comparatively to rates of sprawl due to consumer preferences and government policies. Less sprawl and more people living closer together and closer to places they want to go leads to reduced reliance on cars to do so.

The ageing of cities

Many cities in developed countries are experiencing a rise in the average age of their citizens, and on average people drive less as they get older.

The growth of a culture of urbanism

As young people moving out of family homes, older people are moving back towards city centres from suburbs, as young people too are showing a preference for inner-city life over suburban life, and for other forms of technology over cars.

The rise in fuel prices

Given relatively high fuel costs and price instability, the ownership of a car and its regular use becomes increasingly expensive and decreasingly appealing.

So what does this mean for Sydney?

Sydney is already greater than 'one hour' wide (Penrith is 70km from the CBD by car), public transport is increasingly popular (90% of western Sydney commuters into the CBD come by public transport already) (SGS, 2015), the city is densifying, renewing and reducing the rate at which it sprawls (consider urban renewal projects proximate to the CBD such as at the bays precinct and Green Square), Sydney's average age is increasing along with Australia and most other developed countries, there is a strong culture of urbanism (such as increasing consumer preferences to live within walking distance of 'centres' such as Parramatta) and fuel prices (and toll costs) that continue to impact car owners, especially those with the least ability to afford it.

Sydney is not on a different path to other cities of the developed world. It too is in the middle of 'peak car', meaning that the need exists to reprioritise infrastructure provision to reflect and adapt to this trend.

Induced traffic

Induced traffic occurs when congested motorways increase in capacity (Zeibots, 2007). This increased capacity leads to faster travel times initially, though also gives people more time to travel further by car (as they spend less time travelling on their original trip—and given our travel budgets of up to an hour a day) and also increases appeal for others to either swap travel mode (eg swapping from public transport to car after a motorway expansion) or to create new journeys by car themselves. The 'induced' demand, this creation of new trips and new users of the roadway, ensures that 'congestion-busting' efforts that rely on expanded road capacity are ineffective and is the major reason that even the most traditionally car-dependent cities are turning to alternatives for transportation (such as light rail projects in Phoenix, Dallas and LA, see <http://www.houstonchronicle.com/local/gray-matters/article/Why-car-crazy-cities-are-riding-the-rails-6496939.php> (<http://www.houstonchronicle.com/local/gray-matters/article/Why-car-crazy-cities-are-riding-the-rails-6496939.php>)).

For an easy to read look at induced traffic, see: <http://www.wired.com/2014/06/wuwt-traffic-induced-demand/> (<http://www.wired.com/2014/06/wuwt-traffic-induced-demand/>)

The relationship between peak car and induced traffic —could they happen at the same time in Sydney?

Yes. Peak car is a global occurrence especially common in developed nations. We saw peak car use in Australia in 2004, when the rate of increase in automobile use slowed, and it is a trend that will continue given the other associated societal trends listed above. On the other hand induced traffic relates to location-specific expansions in road capacity. So Sydney certainly could be exhibiting an overall peak in car use while at the same time drivers and everyone else suffer from government decisions that directly lead to more traffic.

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A People's M4 EIS

Westconnex fails Objective 10 : Protect natural & cultural resources and enhance environment

[23/10/2015](#) [25/10/2015](#) [wendybaconblog](#) [Commentaries & Objections](#) [Asbestos, Beverly Hills, Cooks River Iron Bark Bushland, Erskine Park, Green and Golden Bell Frog, Grey Headed Flying Fox, Haberfield, Kathy Calman, property acquisition, salinity, Westconnex Core Objective 10, wetlands](#)

(Editor: This is the third submission prepared from the perspective of the Objectives of the project. The other two did an overview analysis of all ten objectives – [here \(http://m4eis.org/2015/10/17/does-westconnex-meet-its-core-objectives/\)](http://m4eis.org/2015/10/17/does-westconnex-meet-its-core-objectives/) and [here \(http://m4eis.org/2015/10/18/objectives-of-the-m4-project-yet-another-response/\)](http://m4eis.org/2015/10/18/objectives-of-the-m4-project-yet-another-response/)

By Kathy Calman

(Kathy Calman is the co-convenor of the [Beverly Hills Kingsgrove WestCONnex Action Group](https://www.facebook.com/notowestconnexbeverlyhills?fref=ts) (<https://www.facebook.com/notowestconnexbeverlyhills?fref=ts>). She knows a lot about motorways because she has lived beside the M5 at Beverly Hills for years. She knows what it's like to be woken by truck noise in the middle of the night, to count the high percentage of cars with single drivers and she recently watched open space and trees she and other members of her community had planted being stripped away for the King Georges Rd interchange that Westconnex's own figures show will save little or no time for commuters. The community were told that the noise walls that offer some protection from M5 noise would come down for about 15 weeks. The Editor was told by the construction company Fulton Hogan that it could be up to 7 months. No wonder she warns residents of being wary of accepting promises about mitigation of construction impacts that could turn out to be wrong. She's also aware that native flora and fauna saved as a condition of the M5 would go if the Westconnex M5 duplicate is allowed to go ahead.)



(https://m4eis.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/11222423_1873063222917859_3341986940853463042_n3.jpg)

Kathy Calman at
Westconnex Action Group
early morning stall outside
Westconnex headquarters
with her frog cakes

Analysis of Core Objective 9 : Protect natural and cultural resources and enhance the environment.

The Westconnex's Core Objectives are drawn from the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan (Transport for NSW 2012a)

The Westconnex project does not meet this core objective

Features of the M4 East project include: Widening roads; unfiltered exhaust stacks close to homes, schools and aged care centres; destruction of trees; temporary and permanent loss of greenspace; induced traffic onto local roads; impact on wetlands, groundwater and endangered species; exposing residents to prolonged high impact acute noise 24/7; hundreds of significant truck movements a day impacting on the safety of residents particularly primary school children; isolation; community dislocation; car dependence.

None of these factors enhance the environment. In fact, this proposal has a very significant negative impact on the urban and natural environment where over a quarter of a million people live and 64,000 work in the M4 section. It will remove valuable cultural resources including heritage buildings.

Sectional planning approach

I **object** to the sectional planning project approach to the 33 kilometre Westconnex motorway. This prevents serious consideration of the impacts of the larger Westconnex project. **While broad justifications for the whole project are used to justify local threats, there has been no overall analysis and evaluation of the environment threats from the whole project.**

This submission endeavours to take an **holistic approach** to the project and refers to both the M4 and M5.

Community Consultation

I object to the poor standard of community consultation.

Many people have reported that the information kiosks and material provide inadequate and misleading information to the public. The kiosks are attended by casual staff with no background experience or education on the subject matter.

Claims of 'busting congestion' and the various time savings getting from point to point are contradicted even within Westconnex's own EIS, not to mention independent infrastructure experts with worldwide experience (<https://www.facebook.com/NoWestconnex/videos/658196694322742/>) that slam this project as backward looking and based on poor transport planning principles.

The negative impact on thousands of people is either glossed over or embedded somewhere in the fine print in the Westconnex M4 EIS.

- Western Sydney is not aware that their daily commute will become a lot more expensive via new and reintroduced tolls
- Australian and especially NSW tax payers are taking the full risk on the viability of this project
- Unfiltered exhaust stacks – nine for this project spaced roughly every 3km.
- Increased pollution and noise
- Acquisition of parks, green space, homes and business
- Loss of local employment. (Estimation of hundreds in Haberfield alone).
- Impact on non-acquired businesses with loss of passing trade opportunities
- Local roads will be more congested and travel times for many longer
- Loss of an opportunity for NSW to invest in worthwhile public transport infrastructure that is the most efficient way to provide to move masses of people and freight and better meet the needs of the whole of NSW.

Social Impacts

Significant impacts on residents and businesses

Home acquisitions

The stated recommended mitigations in Appendix M is contradicted by actual outcomes. Home Owners ([reported \(http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/residents-offered-far-below-market-value-for-homes-needed-for-westconnex-lawyer-says-20150702-gi3puf.html\)](http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/residents-offered-far-below-market-value-for-homes-needed-for-westconnex-lawyer-says-20150702-gi3puf.html) in the media) claim that lower than market value is offered for their homes and that they are bullied by RMS staff. Longstanding communities members [are being forced to move far from their social networks \(http://www.altmedia.net.au/baird-accused-of-being-blind-to-westconnex-pressure-on-older-residents/111184\)](http://www.altmedia.net.au/baird-accused-of-being-blind-to-westconnex-pressure-on-older-residents/111184).

Renters are also having to seek legal advice for relocation compensation. One long term renter in the same home for 18 years was only offered \$5000 to relocate.

The disadvantaged residents in social housing (including independent homes for people with special needs) of RMS property have not had their needs addressed in the rush to evict hundreds of people from their homes.

Most of these people forced from their homes will likely find they have to move some distance away from where they have established support networks. This would be particularly hard on the frail and elderly.

I object to the mitigation of offer of 'counselling' which even if it does exist (and some say it has not been offered to them) would be of little assistance.

Impacts on social facilities

In the area impacted by the project, there are:

- 8 aged care and nursing homes
- 5 primary schools, 3 high schools and 3 kindergarten to Yr 12
- 5 childcare centres and one tertiary education provider
- A number of sports and recreation facilities
- Religious services a
- Shopping centres

I object to the 'mitigation' for organisations that will be left near the tollway construction site (such as the Willows Private Nursing Home and Peek-a-boo Child Care Centre) described as "consultation for 'relief periods' from 24 / 7 construction (destruction) if "feasible and reasonable". This proposal is shallow and unacceptable.

This is an inhumane approach towards the most vulnerable in our society.



(https://m4eis.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/img_3433.jpg)

Students from Haberfield
Primary School protesting
on the pedestrian bridge
after school

Amenity Mitigation

This project will have a high impact on thousands of people. Noise 24/7 for three years, loss of visual outlook, and views of construction (destruction) compounds should not be trivialised. This is a prolonged construction period.

I object to the suggestion that decorating hoardings and some temporary plantings around the compounds is 'mitigation'.

Sports fields

Locals and visiting teams will be playing active sport within an environment of elevated pollution. Emissions from modern vehicles contains fine particulate matter that can penetrate the cells of lungs. (See Air quality submissions [here](http://m4eis.org/2015/10/15/environmental-justice-westconnex-and-air-pollution/) (<http://m4eis.org/2015/10/15/environmental-justice-westconnex-and-air-pollution/>) and [here](http://m4eis.org/2015/10/22/comments-on-air-quality-impact-statement/) (<http://m4eis.org/2015/10/22/comments-on-air-quality-impact-statement/>).

I object to a project that places the health of the community at risk.

Unsafe Removal of Asbestos.

This dangerous substance has been located in several locations across the Westconnex project already. There is evidence (<https://newmatilda.com/2015/10/02/westconnexs-asbestos-problem/>) that trucks removing asbestos have not been following appropriate safety standards such as sprinkler systems,

washing down trucks before departure, and neglecting to properly cover loads.

I object to the contempt Westconnex has shown for the health and safety of residents (http://www.jennyleong.org/government_forced_to_recognise_westconnex_asbestos_concerns) within the locations and on route to Erskine Park where soil contaminated with asbestos has been dumped without being wetted or properly covered at the time of disposal.

Divisive Infrastructure

I object to a 'solution' that results in a dreadful outcome on the amenity for all impacted suburbs. A wide, dirty and noisy toll road and the spaghetti interchanges thrust through suburbs that form part of Australia's 19th and 20th century history including the destruction of heritage listed homes and historic buildings.

Mental Health

The stress imposed on people by the Westconnex will increase the likelihood of anxiety and depression. The grief people will experience watching the suburb and urban landscape they love permanently destroyed has not been sufficiently addressed in the EIS social impact statement.

The permanent impact of this toll road on thousands of people's physical and mental health through

- visually divisive spaghetti interchanges
- noise barriers -that we know little care to landscaping for residents will be addressed –ref M5 KGR landscape design aka bare noise walls
- prominent and unfiltered exhaust stacks a constant reminder that residents and workers and their families are being poisoned by high levels of pollution
- loss of accessibility by pedestrians and cyclists
- impacts on the elderly for mobility, safety, connectivity and isolation
- impacts to the community and schools with the loss of neighbours
- impacts on the significant number of people forced to leave their home and community – loss of social networks and loss of school mates.
- stress and anxiety brought on by living in a permanent high noise and highly polluted environment.

Cumulative Impacts

Claims of reduced traffic on Parramatta road and improving amenity are unsubstantiated. The traffic congestion on the Parramatta road corridor will not improve (source your EIS). With a better solution to mass transport people (public transport) not addressed and increasing population, Parramatta Road will remain congested.

Impact on businesses

There are approximately 600 permanent jobs that will disappear due to this project due to property acquisitions at Haberfield alone. Remaining businesses, including aged care and child care centres, are likely to fail or suffer significant loss of trade. Suggestions that the patronage of construction workers will augment the local economy seem to be clutching at straws to find a solution here.

Social Infrastructure

Stated mitigation – Landscaping treatments for the benefit of residents. Let's revisit the landscape design of the King Georges Road Interchange – hundreds of metres of bare noise walls because it is easier for the maintenance crew to inspect. Never mind the residents or professional pride or genuine appreciation for the huge disruption caused to residents. Ugly bare walls.

I object to the likely outcome facing residents of the landscaping treatments being a typical, visually divisive structure.

Loss of vegetation

- Tree canopy for the communities along the 33km route of WestConnex is less than 19%. This polluting tollway will remove even more precious greenspace.
- Even a single hectare lost is devastating for highly urbanised communities, particularly where the shared greenspace is all they have.
- WestConnex has not included the overall acquisition of greenspace across the whole Westconnex project in any of its community 'information' material to enable the general public to form an informed opinion of the costs and benefits of the project.

Car Dependence

Build a city for the people – and they will come. Build a city for cars – and congestion will prevail.

Ironically, it is these suburbs – targeted for destruction by Westconex – that demonstrates what the NSW Govt should be the planning for new outer suburb communities. The walkability factor – with ready public transport and local shopping centres. Local employment opportunities or employment centres (including high value jobs) within 60 minutes by public transport. Shared community spaces for gardening and leisure and social connectivity. Cultural and entertainment facilities for all ages.

The infrastructure planning for the new western suburbs, such as near Camden is woeful, with only 7% of Camden residents using public transport. Westconnex promotes socially isolating car dependence and the environmental impact of ever increasing traffic noise and air pollution – and does not provide residents of the western suburbs with any relief from congestion.

I object to this proposal as it is the wrong project for the wrong time.

Biodiversity and natural environment

Australia has the notorious distinction of having possibly the worst extinction record on earth according to Richard Kingsford, professor of environmental science at the University of NSW. This is predicted to continue without serious changes to the way we conserve our environment

Endangered Fauna

Green and Golden Bell Frog

Scientists are studying several species of Australian frogs – including the endangered green and golden bell frog – whose skin secretions are toxic to the multi-drug-resistant golden staph know as MRSA. The GGBF secretions may be the wonder drug of the 21st century. Yet, the overall WestConnex project will more than likely be responsible for the extinction of such an important species.

Rare Grey Headed Flying Fox

The cumulative loss of vegetation for this vulnerable species in the M4 and M5 sections will significantly contribute to the endangerment of yet another species. These flying foxes forage on vegetation regardless if it is original or planted. The Office of Environment and Heritage states that the continued removal of foraging vegetation – and the forced concentration of populations into smaller regions – will result in a continued decline in their numbers.

Eastern Bentwing Bat

The impact on this species will be the loss of foraging habitat and the disturbance of roosting sites. Again, as similar to all of our native animals within Sydney metro, the significant and continued loss of vegetation will have a serious impact on these local communities.

Cooks River Castlereagh Iron Bark bushland

Another cumulative impact on our natural environment, with the loss of a critically endangered stand, a development condition of the first M5, will be destroyed.

Wetlands

Wetlands provide significant economic, social and cultural benefits. They are important for primary products such as pastures, timber and fish and support recreational and tourist activities. Wetlands also help reduce the impacts from storm damage and flooding, maintain good water quality in rivers, recharge groundwater, store carbon, help stabilise climatic conditions and control pests. They are also important sites for biodiversity.

Wetlands cover about 9% of the earth's surface and are estimated to contain around 35% of global terrestrial carbon. Wetlands act as sinks for carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, especially if their vegetation is protected and their natural processes are maintained.

The proposed F6 extension (which is referred to as a given in the EIS although it is not even in early stages of planning) will likely also impact on the Rockdale wetlands – another significant loss to our natural and human environment.

I object to the sectional approach taken to the Westconnex project which makes it difficult to properly assess the cumulative impact on our wetlands across both Westconnex and Southconnex

I object to the unwarranted destruction of what remains of our natural environment for a project which is managed by politicians and business people who continue to hide the business case on which it is based. Westconnex managers have been unable to properly debate or refute the many informed critiques of the project.

Flooding

During construction, there is the potential for local catchment runoff to enter project excavations at the interchange locations and impact the construction ancillary facilities. Construction activities also have the potential to exacerbate flooding conditions in adjacent developments. The mitigation stated are physical barriers designed to protect the works areas and tunnel entries so as not to increase flooding conditions in adjacent areas. The public needs full independent advice on the safety of the tunnels which is not possible in the short period allowed for consultation.

Urban Salinity

I am concerned about the potential for salinity damage that can shorten the life of urban infrastructure such as roads, buildings, water and sewage pipes. This leads to costly maintenance and repair by homeowners and councils.

The movement of excess water and salt in parks and gardens can affect plant growth and cause plant death. Sports grounds and recreation areas affected by urban salinity may become bare, unattractive and unusable. Soil properties can be altered significantly making it hard to revegetate these areas.

Pockets of native vegetation in and around urban landscapes may also be affected. This can have serious consequences including the disappearance of native flora and fauna and poor downstream water quality.

I am concerned about the impact of groundwater and the potential for increased risk of flooding due to the reduction of greenspace.

The public needs access to more independent technical information so that they can understand the true impacts of the project.

I conclude that Westconnex comprehensively fails one of its claimed core objectives – ‘*Protect natural and cultural resources and enhance the environment*’ is not met by the Westconnex project.



(https://m4eis.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/img_3108.jpg)

Trucks waiting to get onto
the M5 at Beverly Hills

Here's another [strong submission from a resident at Haberfield](http://m4eis.org/2015/10/06/a-response-to-westconnex-m4-east-proposal-an-objection-from-a-haberfield-resident/) (<http://m4eis.org/2015/10/06/a-response-to-westconnex-m4-east-proposal-an-objection-from-a-haberfield-resident/>).

[Aurelia's story from Homebush](http://m4eis.org/2015/10/14/westconnex-comes-to-underwood-road-homebush-aurelias-story/) (<http://m4eis.org/2015/10/14/westconnex-comes-to-underwood-road-homebush-aurelias-story/>) also provides more on the social impacts of Westconnex.

Here's a [summary of the Social and Economic Impact Report](http://m4eis.org/2015/10/04/summary-of-m4eis-social-and-economic-impact-reports/) (<http://m4eis.org/2015/10/04/summary-of-m4eis-social-and-economic-impact-reports/>)



(https://m4eis.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/img_3305.jpg)

Kathy Calman knows from experience what it's like to live near a motorway. Her house in Beverly Hills

One thought on “Westconnex fails Objective 10 : Protect natural & cultural resources and enhance environment”

1. **Kathryn** says:
[24/10/2015 at 10:01 am](#) [Edit](#)

The M5 King Georges Road Interchange – Cooloongatta Rd – the noise wall situation is getting worse. An error that we pointed out a year ago in the EIS stated our noise walls were 2.5 metres. They neglected to record that there was a 2 metre mound, making it 4.5 metres (and still we are above RNP night time noise goals at that level).

According to Fulton Hogan – its 3 metres in the EIS and 3 metres we are getting (though the EIS actually recommended our walls should be 8 metres). To make matters worse, we are getting plastic walls. 128 metres of the stuff – instead of concrete barriers. Nice view of 12 lanes of highway!. Thanks residents for putting up with the destruction for 19 months. Here is the payback. An unliveable suburb.

Reply (<http://m4eis.org/2015/10/23/westconnex-fails-objective-10-protect-natural-cultural-resources-and-enhance-environment/?replytocom=180#respond>)

Blog at WordPress.com (https://wordpress.com/?ref=footer_blog). The Big Brother Theme
(<https://wordpress.com/themes/big-brother/>).

A People's M4 EIS

Why no extension for consultation ?

[□ 02/11/2015](#) [02/11/2015](#) [□ wendybaconblog](#) [□ Commentaries & Objections](#) [□](#)
[Brent Devine](#), [David Gainsford](#), [Extension of Time](#)

For months, local councils, MPs and groups opposing Westconnex have been asking for an extension of the consultation period. The minimum period is 30 and groups requested either a minimum of 60 days or three months. When the EIS turned out to be 5000 pages, the community groups renewed their calls including staging a 'read-in' of the EIS at the Department of Planning. The Department granted 45 days and this was extended for a further ten days when Westconnex failed to file all the documents correctly.

On the face of it, the requests for an extension for such a huge project would seem very reasonable – the refusal to provide an extension or even to give reasons for not providing one fuels community fears that the process is only a sham.

This letter was sent by one of the People's EIS team Wendy Bacon to the Senior Planner responsible for the M4 East assessment in the Department of Planning Brent Devine on October 13, 2015.

Dear Brent,

Thank you for speaking with me this morning. The point of my call was to express my concern about the lack of time granted to the community to respond to nearly 5000 pages of EIS. Originally the community was only given 45 days, although the community affected by the Northconnex was given 60 days. This seemed unfair and disproportionate given the difference between the projects. The period was extended after Westconnex failed to properly file their documents.

This is a huge EIS report and its social impacts are complex and affect thousands of people and a number of communities. It is hard to think of an urban project that could have more impact than the Westconnex series of tollways. On the other hand, the EIS documents are not easy to absorb or to handle. There is much repetition and the actual analysis is often hard for the public to identify. I have found that important material is in the appendices so one cannot rely on summary chapters. The task is not made any easier by the lack of page numbers in some sections. PDFs are also difficult to deal with, especially when one is trying to check similar material in different technical reports.

My greatest concern is that a number of serious technical issues have arisen which could affect the health and safety of communities that many feel require independent advice. Given that the communities have very limited resources, it is necessary to seek advice from volunteer qualified advisors who can only

address these issues out of hours. With only 20 days to go, these issues cannot be dealt with adequately by the community. Even Councils are stretched to respond. I am particularly concerned about this because I was told by a consultant at the EIS session in Strathfield last Saturday that she did not consult with Ashfield Council on the actual route of the project. Businesses were also not consulted directly. This means that this is the first and perhaps only chance that communities have a chance to respond to the EIS on the actual route which is quite different from that originally proposed.

If the law allowed for hearings or even merit review, the time restrictions might not worry me as much or seem so unjust. However given the amount of public money at stake and the risks to health, safety and the future mobility of residents and visitors to our city, it would seem to be foolish not to allow the more adequate period of at least three months for consultation.

Please acknowledge receipt of this email. There are many community complaints about Westconnex's poor approach to community consultation. Now residents and groups tell me that they are worried that they will not be able to get their submissions done in time. I trust you will respond very soon as time is running out.

Yours sincerely,

Wendy Bacon

After 10 days, I sent this follow-up email part of which read:

Dear Brent

I have tried to call you – maybe I missed your call back.

I wrote you a quite detailed letter and I expected to at least get some reasons back.

There are now 11 days to go....

I do not know why the government is being so unreasonable but Minister Stokes office says it is up to the Planning Department in which you are the responsible person although not ultimately the decision maker.

There are massive flaws in the EIS and I think the community should be given the time to respond.

On October 22 with 11 days to go, I received this response from Brent Devine:

Hi Wendy,

I realise it has been over a week since your email, and I have escalated your request to the executive staff.

I will follow up and can hopefully provide a response shortly.

Regards,

Brent Devine

A few days later I received a letter from the Executive Director Priority Projects Assessments Planning Services David Gainsford declining my response but offering to post my letter seeking an extension as a response to the EIS. I was asked to communicate my consent back to Ms McCourt.

Here's a slightly edited version of what I wrote back:

Dear Ms McCourt

After waiting more than 10 days for a response from the Department about the an extension for submissions to the M4 East I received a letter from David Gainsford Executive Director Priority Projects Assessments Planning Services.

Disappointingly this letter provided no reasons for not extending the submission period, other than to state it had already been extended from the ludicrously short minimum period of 30 days due the "anticipated level of public interest."

The level of interest is indeed high. This is because many critics of the project are seriously concerned that Westconnex is a short signed and damaging project for Sydney in the 21 century. The are concerned that rather than helping solve Sydney's transport problems, Westconnex will saddle the public with traffic congestion for decades to come as well as great financial costs including loans that will be paid off over many decades .This project has grave implications for impacted communities including health costs that have not been properly assessed in the EIS. To quote Sydney psychiatrist , "Westconnex is slow moving disaster for local affected communities. The disaster is easily avoidable and should be avoided by not proceeding headlong with this project."

I note that you say: "As part of the assessment process, the proponent will prepare a response to all submissions received. This response will be made publicly available on the Department's website. I can assure you that the Department will conduct a rigorous assessment of this proposal and carefully consider all issues raised in submissions prior to making its recommendation to the Minister for Planning."

In the light of this guarantee, I look forward to reading a detailed response to the many arguments that have been raised by critics of the Westconnex which do not so far appear to have penetrated the closed thinking of those who prepared the EIS reports. It was disappointing to see that there was no engagement in the EIS with the significant criticisms raised by SGS Consulting that were hired by City of Sydney earlier in the year to prepare a report that was widely publicised. It is reassuring to know that you will consider "all submissions" as many citizens have gone to considerable trouble amidst busy lives in the short time available to address the issues.

I would expect that it would take a considerable amount of time to rigorously assess all the submissions and carefully consider the issues raised. I suggest that as part of your assessment you make good the failure of the Social Impact Assessment to consult with residents in affected suburbs. I find it alarming that public dollars have been spent on a social impact assessment that consisted of a a desktop review and some consultation with Ashfield Councils, other Councils and some organisations in 2014 on a different route, plus a few questions to organisations sent via Westconnex communications staff in 2015. In 2015 Ashfield Council was not consulted at all and there were no direct communications by the consultant with residents affected.

Thank you for the offer from Mr Gainsford to publish my letter as a response. You have my consent. Although it will not be necessary as I can upload it as a response myself along with this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Wendy Bacon

The planning staff all seem like reasonable people on the phone but nevertheless their decisions do not seem reasonable. They are treating the public very shabbily. I'd still like to know – who actually made this decision not to grant an extension – the Premier Mike Baird, the Minister for Planning Rob Stokes, the Minister for Roads Duncan Gay or the head of the Sydney Motorway Corporation – Dennis Cliche? Why the rush – because the contracts were let before the planning process?

Create a free website or blog at WordPress.com (https://wordpress.com/?ref=footer_website).
The Big Brother Theme (<https://wordpress.com/themes/big-brother/>).

- The DP&E website: <http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/> (<http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/>)
- At selected local council offices and libraries in the Auburn, Strathfield, Canada Bay, Burwood and Ashfield local government areas
- At selected Roads and Maritime offices
- At various staffed displays in the region, as advertised in local media
- Via the WestConnex website: <http://www.westconnex.com.au> (<http://www.westconnex.com.au>).

WDA will continue conducting community information sessions. A project information line (1300 660 248) will also be available throughout the exhibition period to answer enquiries relating to the project.

Feedback on the project during the exhibition period should be made via a written submission to the Secretary of DP&E, quoting the project number (SSI 6307). All submissions received will be placed on the DP&E website.

Written submissions may be made online at <http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au> (<http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au>) or directed to:

SSI 6307
 NSW Department of Planning and Environment
 GPO Box 39
 Sydney NSW 2001

One thought on “**Executive summary: WestConnex M4 East Environmental Impact Statement**”

1. **wendybaconblog** says:
[25/09/2015 at 9:34 pm](#) [Edit](#)

This is just a short comment on the executive summary of the EIS for the M4 tunnel. The whole EIS is more than 4800 pages long but although this is only a summary, it reveals some of the key weaknesses of the whole assessment process.

These are some preliminary points that come to mind. Putting my thoughts together provides a starting point for my submission which I hope to share with many others. If you would like to share ideas or add comments leave them on this site or contact me at wendybacon1@gmail.com (<mailto:wendybacon1@gmail.com>).

The first point of my submission will be that I will be **objecting** to the whole Westconnex project. I'm strongly opposed to any method of planning in which a company – in this case CIMIC -is given a 2 billion contract before the EIS was even lodged. I've read no evidence

that convinces me that 33 kilometres of tollway will solve Sydney's traffic problems, indeed Westconnex might make it worse for residents in many parts of Sydney, including in the West that for so long has been deprived of public transport.

Of course, the issues raised in these preliminary comments will later be checked for fairness or verified in the chapter for the topic and the appendices of the consultants' reports.

The main point that struck me on my initial reading is that the positive benefits of the project are claimed for the **whole** Westconnex project including some other projects such as the Southern extension (tollroad up from the Southern Suburbs to Arncliffe) which are not even part of the Westconnex project at all. On the other hand, the negative impacts are only discussed in relation to this part of the project, the M4 tunnel between Homebush and Haberfield.

There is **NO** explanation for why this transparently biased approach is taken.

We read about claims of economic advantage and jobs generated by the Westconnex. No doubt jobs could be created but could they have been created for some other more useful project? We are expected to accept all the positive claims at face value but when it comes to the negative impacts, the approach is quite different. For example, we read that about 200 homes would be destroyed for the Westconnex M4 tunnel alone. However we are not told how many homes would be destroyed along the whole Westconnex routes. The same goes for businesses and vegetation. There is no cumulative accounting of the ecological, social or financial costs of the whole Westconnex. Even the negative local impacts of this M4 part of the project, that will seriously impact on thousands of citizens, are glossed over.

It's disturbing that the EIS has been managed and to a large extent produced by Aecom (<http://www.wendybacon.com/2015/westconnex-eis-company-is-heavily-involved-in-pushing-motorway-forward/>) which has other interests in the Westconnex project from conception to construction. Its Sydney branch had been naively promoting the Westconnex on its website since last year. The international engineering design and construction company which is listed on the New York Stock Exchange paid more than \$200 million dollars for a settlement (<http://www.wsj.com/articles/aecom-unit-pays-us-201-million-to-settle-australia-toll-road-lawsuit-1442826365>) of a case in which it was sued for negligent traffic predictions for the Rivercity tollway project. A spokesperson for AECOM told the Wall Street Journal last week that the company isn't doing traffic predictions anymore but isn't that part of what it's doing for Westconnex? Why would the community rely on this company for its traffic predictions? Of course, none of this embarrassing matter is discussed or even referred to in the EIS. The Baird's government's recklessness in handling \$15.4 billion of public money is breathtaking.

There are a lot of vague references to additional public transport options that will be provided along the route. For example, there is mention of two bus lanes that would operate along Parramatta Road when the M4 tunnel opens. However at an EIS exhibition session that I attended recently I was told that these lanes would NOT open at the beginning of operation. The effect of the buslanes will be to force/encourage drivers onto the tollway but as one WDA person said " people can't take too much change at once." They also said that the buslanes would require new infrastructure such as crossings to be installed. So since the bus lanes are outside the scope of this project, none of these problems are discussed although this promise would appear to be key to the claim that traffic would

go through the tolled tunnel rather than Parramatta Road. Contrast this to the way destructive Westconnex impacts are treated. For instance, the dislocation of communities in Homebush and Haberfield is passed over as a temporary impact. There is no appreciation of the cost either emotional and financial of uprooting households and forcing them to reestablish homes elsewhere. The impact of what could happen to people along the route whether they are homeowners, renters or businesses is glossed over as a minor problem that would be 'mitigated' to the extent that it is possible.

In the 'Alternatives' section, there is mention of public transport not providing 'point to point' access to workplaces and homes. Often a mixture of public transport and walking or cycling is at least as efficient as travelling by car. A tollroad does not take you 'point to point' either unless you are unlucky enough to live or work on the perimeter of one. In fact once you come off the toll road you are likely to be stuck in an even worse traffic jam than before as the history of tollroads shows that they do not solve traffic congestion.

As for air quality, the executive summary makes it sound like there is nothing to worry about. There is no mention of the health impacts of encouraging drivers commuting across Sydney to sit in their cars for hours a day. Some negative air quality impacts are acknowledged but they tend to be smoothly passed over or masked by bureaucratic language. We need to research the data provided to discover the location of 'receptors' for whom air quality will deteriorate and draw on up-to-date international research on air quality.

Also the EIS authors claim that air quality will not deteriorate at the tunnel exits because emissions will be blown back down the tunnel by fans and released through the unfiltered ventilation stacks. But what about 200 metres away beyond the portals where drivers find themselves in a bottleneck as traffic flow slows down? The air quality claims in the EIS need to be rigorously tested by a range of experts. At the end of the day, if the traffic estimates are wrong, most of the other EIS predictions will be wrong as well.

There are many other parts of the executive summary that beg for closer examination. I hope to do more reading and posting of comments soon. Do you have more information or ideas about any of these points? Are I wrong on some of them? What do you think?

One of the objects of Westconnex is to "protect natural and cultural resources and enhance the environment." They are easy words to write.

In that context you would surely need clear objective evidence that traffic congestion would be hugely better before knocking down neighbourhoods, subjecting communities to unhealthy noise stress, building non-filtered ventilation stacks near schools, destroying heritage buildings and hectares of vegetation? Instead we read that "modelling outputs suggest that the project would create average travel time savings of between six and eight minutes in 2021 on strategic routes between Western Sydney and the CBD." Now that doesn't seem enough to justify the permanent destruction of communities, foregone opportunities for other more worthwhile projects and the years of construction impacts including noise, vibration, dust, traffic congestion and millions of extra diesel trucks trips over our roads. Wouldn't we be better off if we could drive to a 'park and ride' car park or walk to get a train that we could rely on to arrive frequently and on time? Is that too much for residents of Sydney to expect?

Many would argue that rather than protecting “natural and cultural resources and enhance the environment”, this project will achieve the opposite. A fair planning assessment would reject the project or at least call a halt until a serious independent inquiry could be undertaken. The original idea of an EIS was for projects to be scrutinised by independent scientific analysis but in this and many other cases, the planning process has been subverted by vested interests.

[Reply \(http://m4eis.org/2015/09/18/executive-summary-westconnex-m4-east-environmental-impact-statement/?replytocom=44#respond\)](http://m4eis.org/2015/09/18/executive-summary-westconnex-m4-east-environmental-impact-statement/?replytocom=44#respond)

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