

7 September 2014

Director - Infrastructure Projects
Department of Planning and Environment
Number: SSI 13_6136
Major Projects Assessment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

NorthConnex Application Number: SSI 13_6136

Please find below my submission in response to the exhibition of the EIS for NorthConnex. I would like to state upfront that I am opposed to the project as currently described in the EIS.

Myself and my husband moved to Warrawee 6 years ago, when our eldest child was 2. We are now lucky enough to have two children who both attend Wahroonga Public School. I am shocked about the proposed ventilation stacks from the NorthConnex tunnel which will be built in a highly residential area which is close to my children's school and home. I understand the need for more roads but the ventilation stacks for this new tunnel should not be erected in a densely populated residential area which includes 12 schools. The health risk to our children is unacceptable.

The below issues are my primary concerns regarding the NorthConnex tunnel and I request that these be considered by NorthConnex and the Department of Planning:

1. Placement of the northern ventilation stack in the centre of a densely populated residential area in Wahroonga, which includes 12 schools, as well as numerous aged care facilities, hospitals, businesses and homes. As stated above, I have two young children who attend Wahroonga Public School and I truly can not believe that in a residential area that is packed with schools, that it was even considered to erect the ventilation stacks in this area. I request that it is urgently considered to move this ventilation stack to an area that is not so densely populated.
2. The placement of the northern ventilation stack in a valley in Wahroonga where there are often low wind speeds, which will result in poor dispersion and exposure to community to high levels of tunnel emission.
3. I am highly concerned about the serious health impacts of air pollution. There are multiple large scale research studies that suggest the impacts of air pollutants on health are serious. These include increased death from heart disease, increased risks of lung cancer, stroke, poor lung growth in children and increased asthma. These studies confirm air pollutants have prothrombotic and inflammatory effects on humans which cause the above health problems. Furthermore, linked to this point, is the large amount of diesel emissions which will be emitted from the tunnel as it's designed for heavy vehicles to bypass Pennant Hills Rd. The World Health Organisation has classified diesel emissions as carcinogenic and they also contain fine particles which penetrate deep into lung tissue and remain there. I am highly concerned about all these

NorthConnex EIS Submission

health impacts on the entire affected population, but especially on our young children who will grow up here.

4. I am concerned about the project including future provisions for portal emissions in densely populated areas, which will result in emissions remaining at ground level, and hence exposing the local population to pollutants. I am also concerned that NorthConnex's claim that there will no portal emissions from current proposal cannot be verified.
5. I am concerned about the multiple flaws in the air quality modelling of the northern stack in the EIS. These include:
 - a) extrapolation of meteorological data from other weather stations which do not reflect the local meteorology, local topography, and the valley location.
 - b) The use of a coarse topographical model
 - c) The failure to consider polluted intake air from the Pennant Hills/M2 interchange as part of the project contribution to air quality at Wahroonga
 - d) the background air quality being based on air quality at Lindfield and Prospect and the lack of any actual data on PM_{2.5}
6. I am concerned that a full and transparent options assessment process was not undertaken to assess alternative designs for the project. Unlike other tunnel projects in Sydney there are alternatives for locating the stack and portals in non-residential areas. I would like these alternatives to be appropriately considered. I do not understand why one of these alternatives was not chosen from the beginning. I understand it will cost more money but I can't believe that Australia has turned into a place where we will "sell" our children's health. I find it unacceptable and would hope that we have a government that is not prepared to negatively impact the health of its own people, including children who rely on adults to protect and look after them, in order to save money.

To address my concerns I request that the following actions are undertaken:

1. The Department does not approve the project in its current form as it clearly does not meet the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development as required by the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.
2. An independent review is undertaken to assess and choose a more appropriate alternative location for the ventilation stacks and portals.
3. A long term health study on residents, and children in particular, in areas impacted by stack discharges be included as part of the conditions of approval.
4. A comprehensive air quality monitoring program is developed and implemented.
5. Portal emissions from NorthConnex in the future are banned.

Elizabeth Mann
Warrawee 2074