

9 September 2014

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

Via online form:

[http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view\\_job&job\\_id=6136](http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=6136)

**NorthConnex Application Number: SSI 13\_6136**

Please find below my submission in response to the exhibition of the EIS for NorthConnex.

Firstly I would like to state I object to the project as described in the EIS.

Our home is approximately 75 metres from the Proposed Portal and Exhaust Stack in Wahroonga.

We are close enough to see, hear and smell the portal exit and the exhaust stack. My partner and I are both professionals in our 50s with an extended family of 6 children's who often live with us and were all educated locally, we also have an elderly mother who lives near by in a Wahroonga Retirement Village within 500 metres of the stack.

I have been involved in significant Global Infrastructure projects (Submarine Cables connecting Australia to other countries) and I am aware of the significant community consultation that goes into getting all the appropriate approvals for such a large infrastructure project such as this.

I have a high level of concern regarding the following issues and request that NorthConnex and the Department of Planning consider these. In regards to the NorthConnex tunnel, I am concerned about:

1. Placement of the northern ventilation stack in a residential area near many residents, many of them elderly and children at the many nearby schools.
2. The geography of the valley the proposed stack is in and the low height of the stack seems to have not taken into consideration the local conditions that include high trees, frequent low cloud, inversion layers and very light winds.
3. The flawed data used in the modeling weather conditions in the area of the stack, namely that the weather conditions in the Wahroonga Valley in the model were based on data from Terry Hills, which is very different being nearer the coast and a much windier location.
4. Flawed base data used for the quality of the air that enters the tunnel at the Pennant Hills end i.e. instead of modeling it on the "motorway polluted air" that actually enters the tunnel it was modeled on clean air from a water reservoir nowhere near a motor way. If the base data is incorrect how wrong are the conclusions?



## NorthConnex EIS Submission

5. Modeling that did not take into account severe events such as fires in the tunnel or accidents that stop the traffic, modeling was done on best-case scenarios and averages. The local community will have to live with the consequences of "non average" events.
6. No consideration given for monitoring Portal emissions which for me is a huge issue with the Portal being so close to our home, the rationale from NorthConnex "that there will be no Portal emissions so no monitoring is required", clearly with a three lane 5.3 metre high exit there will be Portal emissions and in particular some of the most dangerous fine particles including brake dust.
7. Traffic modeling is based on the improved efficiency of vehicles on the road but seems to ignore the well-established trend in Australia of more vehicles being diesel powered. Diesel fumes and the fine particles in that pose some of the most serious health risks to the community. Again the base data is making assumptions that could be seriously wrong should this trend to diesel vehicle continue or accelerate.
8. The business case presented via Transurban is very focused on avoiding any costs they are required to absorb such as compulsory acquiring properties. What is not built into any cost benefit is the cost to many residents of the placement of the Portal and Stack in a residential area. This does impact property values and a section of the community including ourselves have had to wear the burden of Transurban business case to achieve their financial outcomes. No compensation has been discussed or offered. This cost should be factored into the business case when considering other options.
9. I am concerned about the appalling lack of community consultation during this process, from the moment we first heard about the project on the news, the unanswered questions from Transurban and the PR speak and responses to questions, as an unsolicited bid they should have sought and gained community support or understanding. In particular an answer to a question raised three times which wasn't answered, "Who ultimately would be liable should the emissions from this tunnel prove to cause significant health issues in the future." This was never answered, this lack of long term accountability doesn't provide much confidence that any commercial interests are factoring any sort of long term risk into the business case and design.
10. There was little consideration given to filtration on the basis it didn't improve air quality inside the tunnel and was expensive. Discussions with NorthConnex avoided answering any questions about the potential value of filtration to the local community near the stack.
11. Repeated requests for examples from overseas where what Transurban was proposing for NorthConnex has been successfully deployed were never answered in this EIS, it appears this proposal is unique and is not taking using a proven operating designs.

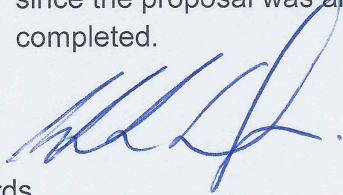
To address my concerns I request that the following actions are undertaken:

1. The Department does not approve this project in the current form until the community concerns about health issues associated with the placement of the Portal and Ventilation shaft are addressed.



## NorthConnex EIS Submission

2. Consideration is given for independent option assessment for different designs that move the portal and stack to a non-residential area.
3. That there is an independent review of the benefits of filtration to air quality and health of the residents near the exhaust stack and portal.
4. An independent review of the ventilation system is undertaken to ensure that NorthConnex's claim of no portal emissions is justified.
5. Portal emissions from NorthConnex in the future are banned.
6. The Submissions Report/Preferred Project is exhibited to allow the community to respond to the revised information contained in the report.
7. A long-term health study on children and residents in areas impacted by stack discharges be included as part of the conditions of approval.
8. Consideration is given to providing some assistance (stamp duty relief) to residents who own homes within 200 metres of the Portal who have moved since the proposal was announced or do move prior to the tunnel being completed.



Regards

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