

10 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

NorthConnex Application Number: SSI 13_6136

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

I am a concerned mother living within 2.5kms of the proposed site of the North Connex ventilation stack, well within the path of any windborne pollutants and emissions released from the tunnel. I have two young children, both of whom attend Waitara Public school, which is within 500m of the proposed stack. This school has an enrolment of almost 700 children, all of whom would be exposed to pollutants at recess and lunch each and every day, an unacceptable risk for parents to have to take with their health. In addition, [REDACTED] I strongly believe that the stack would impact negatively on [REDACTED] health and quality of life. The siting of the ventilation stack in its current proposed location will affect in excess of 9,000 school children with unknown health implications, and no guarantee of 'safety' can be provided. I strongly object to the project as described in the EIS.

I have a high level of concern regarding the following issues and request that these be considered by NorthConnex and the Department of Planning. Issues of the greatest concern are:

1. The placement of the northern ventilation stack in the centre of a densely populated residential area in Wahroonga, where 9,300 school children will be exposed, as well as multiple aged care facilities, hospitals, businesses and homes. The stack is also proposed to be located in a valley area in Wahroonga, which is often characterised by low wind speeds. This would mean that the dispersal of particulates and other pollutants would be poor, and the exposure of the community to concentrated levels of emission would be heightened.
2. Several large scale research studies have indicated that the health implications of exposure to air pollutants are serious. These implications include increased death from heart disease, increased risks of lung cancer, stroke, poor lung growth in children, increased asthma, and recent research suggesting low birth weight for pregnant women, increased autism, and congenital heart defects. In addition, studies indicate that exposure to air pollutants may lead to increased risk of thrombosis and have an inflammatory effect on humans.

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3. Northconnex' claim that there will be no portal emissions from the current proposal cannot be verified. If this occurs, local residents will be exposed to air pollutants at ground level.
4. The NorthConnex tunnel is designed for heavy freight vehicles to bypass the Pennant hills Road. These vehicles emit a large amount of diesel emissions, which have been proven by the World health Organisation to have carcinogenic effects. In addition, diesel emissions contain fine particles with can penetrate deep into lung tissue and cause inflammation and respiratory problems.
5. I am concerned about the air quality within the tunnel which is shown in the EIS to possibly exceed standards for pollutants such as NO₂, and haze from particulate matter at the ends of the tunnel.
6. I am concerned about the multiple flaws in the air quality modelling of the northern stack in the EIS. These include:
 - a) conjecture from other weather stations not related to the weather stations i the vicinity of the tunne.
 - 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}
7. I am concerned alternatives for locating the stack and portals in non-residential areas have not been considered, or have been studiously ignored when considering the placement of this tunnel.
8. I am concerned that the justification for not providing filtration for the stacks is cursory and unconvincing.

I strongly object to the placement of the ventilation stack i the Wahroongha residential area. I entreat the council and all concerned parties to investigate alternative options and consider preserving the health and well being of the thousands of school children and elder citizens in the area concerned.

Wahroonga and its residents deserve better than the underhand and deceitful way in which this decision has been implemented, and our vouce deservest to be heard.

We ask that the following action sare undertaken:

1. The air quality and human health impact assessment need to be revised to address the issues raised above.
2. An independent options assessment process should be undertaken to assess alternative locations for the ventilation stack and portals.
3. To undertake a Life Cycle Analysis and assessment for the provision of filtration
4. A long term health study on children and residents in areas impacted by stack discharges be included as part of the conditions of approval.

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5. A comprehensive air quality monitoring program is developed and implemented.
6. An independent review of the ventilation system is undertaken to ensure that NorthConnex's claim of no portal emissions is justified.
7. Portal emissions from NorthConnex in the future are banned.
8. The Submissions Report/Preferred Project be exhibited to allow the community to respond to the revised information contained in the report.
9. 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.

Sheena Wilkinson
12 Chifley CLose
North Wahroonga
NSW 2076