

11 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 object to the proposed NorthConnex tunnel project. It is an irresponsible and damaging plan. It will cause serious health impacts on the local community.

I believe the health impacts are guaranteed to be serious, yet they are also of unknown gravity because the modelling for the emissions from the tunnel is not clear. The data used in the projections is not local data and the geographical information is not of sufficient quality. This means we will not know where the 'ventilated' emissions will be deposited until after the stack is built. By then it will be too late and the community will have to live under the damaging effects of concentrated vehicle exhaust.

The project is an unsolicited proposal, which should give an indication of the fact that commercial interest is being privileged over community and child protection. The NorthConnex plan is designed to be cheap for the Australian and NSW Government, rather than to eliminate health risks and provide an effective transport solution. Alternatives should be costed and considered.

These could include:

- Abandoning the project in favour of public transport development and investment in to other environmentally friendly transport options
- Abandoning the project in favour of an alternative car-based solution for congestion on Pennant Hills Road
- Performing a comprehensive study on the origin and destination of this traffic, to see if it might be prevented at its source through targeted public transport
- Changing the design of the tunnel to make it easier for cars to travel using less fuel
- Moving the stack away from homes and schools to undeveloped bushland or an industrial area – creating an on-ground tunnel will aid this
- Placing filtration on the stack with a guarantee of its constant operation and monitoring, and with enforceable penalties for non-compliance
- Building a higher stack to reduce the risk of pollution being caught in a thermal inversion and trapped at ground level

If the project is permitted I ask that:

- Community consultation be ongoing through the construction and operation of the tunnel to make sure that environmental, heritage and transport issues are dealt with
- Live data and data archives be made available to the public. This will to allow an informed choice for citizens as to whether they wish to use this tunnel or live in proximity to the ventilation stacks
- The NSW Government fund studies to demonstrate that the use of this tunnel and the presence of the ventilation stacks and entrance/exits does no lasting damage to the residents and tunnel users
- The NSW Government fund additional healthcare services for those whose asthma, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases will be exacerbated by the guaranteed increased concentration of pollutants from the NorthConnex project

The NorthConnex tunnel proposal is flawed and requires review. The community needs to have complete assurance that pollution from this tunnel will not impact the health of the residents and schoolchildren, who will live, work and play nearby. In absence of this mitigation of risk, the only responsible courses of action will be to delay the project and move the stack.