

Submission on the NorthConnex EIS (Environmental Impact Statement).

**Department of Planning and Environment, Major Project Assessment, Attn:
Assessing Officer, Application No SSI136136, GPO Box 39 Sydney 2001 or
www.majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au**

I have serious concerns about this project which must be addressed in the interest of public health and safety.

Air Quality

- Air quality in the tunnel will be monitored continuously for the operational life of the tunnel but the air quality along Pennant Hills Road will only be monitored for 12 months. This needs to be monitored independently for the operational life of the tunnel and be available for public scrutiny so that health and other impacts can be assessed.
- How can an automated air monitoring station, like the one at Observatory Park, cost a reported \$3000 a week to operate?
- Tunnels concentrate pollution to levels well above those on surface roads. Travellers in Sydney tunnels are exposed to 10 - 20 times the pollution, especially of particulate matter, than experienced on an open motorway. This could increase to 50% in peak traffic.
- The tunnel, 9km long, will not be filtered. Particles under 1 micron from diesel fumes are carcinogenic (cancer causing) and called the 'new asbestos' because their impacts take a long time to manifest. Concentrated emissions will come from the unfiltered stacks at the southern (near Pennant Hills Golf Club) and northern end (Wahroonga) and drift onto nearby residences and schools endangering the long term health of the community. Children are particularly vulnerable as they are growing. These stacks must be filtered.
- NorthConnex seems to believe that this highly carcinogenic and toxic pollution drifts upwards. Research shows it cascades down from the stacks and drifts on the wind over surrounding neighbourhoods. No modelling has been conducted in the areas of these stacks to assess emission drift.
- The claimed benefit of a reduction in total pollution in tunnels due to the speeding up of traffic is quickly lost if traffic slows due to increased use of the tunnel. Most of the claims in the EIS relating to reduced pollution seem to be based of wishful thinking rather than fact.
- No modelling has been done to show what would happen if a vehicle caught fire in the tunnel or if the emergency stacks are used.
- Were the social impact costs from tunnel pollution assessed especially with regard to the 'new asbestos' problem from fine particulate emissions which will not be filtered out. This is in a high residential area and one with many high attendance schools.

Construction Traffic

- The construction traffic route proposed by NorthConnex uses local suburban streets that are already at a standstill during peak hour and will add 50 heavy vehicle movements per hour in morning peak and more than 1,800 vehicle movements per day for up to 5 years during the construction period.
- No decision has been made on where the tunnel spoil will be dumped.

The Process

- Has this unsolicited proposal gone through the required proberty checks?Did these proberty checks fully and properly assess Transurban's financial ability to undertake this project.
- Why was the project not subjected to a cost benefit analysis as required under the EP&A Act? Which officers in the Dept of Planning are responsible for assessment of this project for giving ministerial approval? This is to deal with the issue of possible malfeasance.
- Were any alternatives sought, considered or analysed? Was the alternative Western Option from Dean Park to Kariong considered. This follows travel desire lines and would provide a real solution for the missing link in the national highway, as reported in the enquiry by the late Marla Pearlman.

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