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11 September 2014

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



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

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

Our concern relates to **the operational air quality impact on residents at the northern end of the NorthConnex tunnel.**

We note the following in relation to the northern ventilation outlet:

1. It is located in the centre of a densely populated residential area of 50,000 people, where there are 9,500 school children, many aged care facilities, two major hospitals and various businesses. It will pump out a huge quantity of unfiltered traffic pollution from the northern half of a 9km long tunnel
2. Section 7.3 of the EIS documents states that the existing air quality at the ends of the tunnel will deteriorate with the implementation of the project. This deterioration logically results from the emission of airborne pollutants, which at present are dispersed along the 9km length of Pennant Hills Road, but which will in future be concentrated at the ends of the tunnel
3. Health professionals advise that 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. They advise, based on research studies, that air pollutants have prothrombotic and inflammatory effects on humans which cause these health problems
4. We note from Section 7.4 of the EIS that a human health risk assessment has been carried out and that the potential impact of the project on human health has been assessed as negligible, based on analysis undertaken by the project proponents
5. However, based on a recent OECD report and other published studies, local health professionals are concerned that the increase in diesel vehicles emitting small “nano” particles is the “asbestos of the twenty first century”. These emissions and nano particles will be dumped onto 9,500 school children and local residents each day from the NorthConnex ventilation outlet

6. Even though the likelihood of occurrence is has been assessed as low, the potential consequences are extremely high – death, lung cancer stroke etc. In view of the seriousness of the potential health impacts of the project, it is essential that both the air quality analysis and the resulting human health impacts be rigorously reviewed by an expert or experts independent of the project prior to its approval by the Department of Planning. It would be irresponsible to rush the approval process without first making certain that the emissions from this very long road tunnel will not be the “asbestos of the twenty first century”

To address our concern, we request that the following action be undertaken:

1. The potential health impacts of the project should be reviewed by a recognised expert in the field of public health, who is independent of the project and the State Government. It is suggested that a person such as Professor Stephen Leeder, Professor Emeritus in Public Health and Community Medicine at the University of Sydney, would be a suitable independent reviewer. A representative of the Australian Medical Association should also participate in the review. The reviewers should be asked to consider the potential health impacts of the project, and to reach agreement with the project proponents that the potential health impacts are demonstrably negligible. This review should take place prior to the approval of the project by the Department of Planning. This action would add transparency to a vital aspect of the project, serve to allay community concerns and verify that public health will not be compromised by the project.

Your sincerely,



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