

I write to express my absolute opposition, in the strongest possible terms, to the WestConnex M4 Widening Project. I believe that the project is dangerously flawed and utterly misguided. The urban problems faced by Sydney will not be addressed by vast new motorway construction – a response which, it seems, only Australia among nations of the developed world seems not to have learnt is doomed to failure.

The proposal represents an out-of-date and dangerous approach to a real problem. Experts in traffic modeling and transport planning, such as Dr Michelle Zeibots at the University of Technology Sydney, have demonstrated that the construction of larger motorway systems does not solve the problem of traffic congestion in anything but the shortest of terms: in fact they generate higher levels of uptake in road use which rapidly exceed the capacity of the new road, in the mean time leaving the urgently-needed complementary provision of high-quality public transport alternatives denuded of support. The proposal is also out of line with the clear wishes of Sydney's population, which has been increasingly seeking to use public transport over roads (see 7 below); and with the solutions that look to the greater health of the environment and its human population.

I do not want my children to grow up in a city that is polluted and congested, that is run, effectively, by property developers, and where ordinary citizens are kept in the dark about decisions that affect them so directly (see 1 and 8 below). I want to live in a city that I can be proud of, which leads the way in sustainable urban development – WestConnex would be a missed opportunity for Sydney to shine.

Given the extremely short period allowed for public consultation (see 1 below), I am obliged to keep my comments brief.

1. **The period during which the EIS is available for public study and response is completely inadequate.** When such huge sums of public money are involved, this is inexcusable and suggests a furtive intent to keep public scrutiny to an absolute minimum.
2. **The WestConnex M4 Widening Project is only one segment of the much larger WestConnex project.** The EIS shows that any success that may be claimed to emerge from the M4 Widening Project is predicated on the entire project being implemented. Given the fact of its integral relationship to the other phases of the WestConnex project, it would be wrong to approve the M4 Widening Project. **Such approval would prejudice judgment on its later phases. The entire WestConnex project should be presented and considered as the whole which it is advertised to be.**
3. **The EIS makes it plain that the proposed widening will have no real wider benefits without the full WestConnex project** (see 2 above). The creation of the wider segment of motorway will inevitably generate greater traffic congestion at its end-point. This is a demonstrated fact known to all traffic and transport experts, as well as being easily deducible by common sense. The improvement alleged for the travel times is in any case based on the introduction of 4 tolled lanes of motorway which will, it is anticipated, handle lower flows of traffic, while it is assumed by the M4 Widening Project that large numbers of trucks and other vehicles will move to the non-tolled Parramatta Road. **This management by economic charge of traffic flows will have, among its many**

**negative consequences, the effect of considerably increasing the pollution and other loss of amenity in precisely the areas targeted for ‘urban regeneration’ along the Parramatta Road.** This problem was seen and expressed explicitly more than 18 months ago by Mr Thomas van Drempt, a Senior Transport Engineer at Parsons Brinckerhoff Inc., who was contracted to work on transport options along the Parramatta Road corridor (see <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/emails-reveal-doubts-on-westconnex-parramatta-road-revival-20140807-10121c.html>).

4. Furthermore, **many or all of the improvements in travel time are based on entirely inadequate, soft statistical projections** (the absence of adequate usage projection estimates as recently as April of this year was revealed by the release of working papers on WestConnex under Freedom of Information legislation) **or are completely trivial.** For instance, at page ii of the Executive Summary it is stated that ‘When completed, the widened M4 Motorway would save motorists around one minute on an evening peak westbound journey from Homebush Bay Drive to Church Street.’ **It is risible, or rather rampantly irresponsible, to propose the expenditure of \$15 billion of public monies to achieve such a result.**
5. **The EIS fails adequately to address the potential solutions provided by public transport to the real problems facing Sydney’s transport systems.** One of the most critical issues identified by the EIS – the high demand for west-to-east transport generated by the demography of employment distribution – could much more easily and cost-effectively be solved by improving existing public transport systems and building new ones. Evidence of the Government’s own Traffic and Transport Working paper shows that it acknowledged that the lack of adequate public transport is the real problem: ‘Fragmented economic development across Sydney has meant that many jobs are in non-centre locations that are poorly served by public transport. There are more jobs in Sydney’s east compared to Sydney’s west, generating a net flow of journey to work trips from west to east. Furthermore, many jobs in the east are also out of centre jobs not in Sydney CBD (e.g. the southern part of the Global Economic Corridor). Strategic centres hold 41 per cent of jobs within Sydney’s east. These areas are not well served by public transport, particularly from Sydney’s west and WestConnex would support travel to these out of centre jobs.’ To conclude that a motorway will solve the public transport shortages identified by the Government is ludicrous.
6. **The WestConnex M4 Widening Project (and the larger Westconnex project) not only fail to conform to the NSW Government’s own 2021 Policy, they directly subvert it:** namely, for instance, Goal 20, *Build liveable centres*, with the target to ‘Increase the percentage of the population living within 30 minutes by public transport of a city or major centre in metropolitan Sydney’; while under Goal 19 *Invest in Critical Infrastructure*, the Government has committed to ‘Enhance rail freight movement: double the proportion of container freight movement by rail through NSW ports by 2020’. The EIS makes it abundantly clear that the WestConnex M4 Widening Project will do nothing to achieve this, but rather erode available funding to achieve these ends for many years to come.
7. **The information provided by the Government in the EIS and associated literature such as the WestConnex Factsheet (December 2012) claims that Westconnex should be built in order to cut travel times. But the figures**

**provided show that this is a misleading interpretation of the data.** For instance, the WestConnex Factsheet (December 2012) states that the trip by road from Parramatta to the Airport will take 66 minutes with WestConnex. However transportnsw's own trip-planner shows that, even at peak times, the trip can be made in around 47 minutes, on the city's present system of public transport. Imagine how swift it would be if even a fraction of the \$15 billion proposed for expenditure on WestConnex were instead diverted to the more productive, forward-looking and intelligent provision of public transport. **All the statistical evidence currently available shows that the growth in uptake and further appetite for public transport in Sydney is on the increase.** See esp. the *NSW 2011/12 Household Travel Survey*, which shows that in the past decade, the demand for trains in Sydney has grown by 23%, nearly twice the extent of the increase in the city's population over the same period (12%); while the demand for buses has similarly increased at a rate (16%) greater than that of the population.