



Charles Casuscelli RFD MP

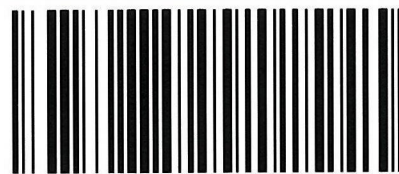
Member for Strathfield



12th September 2014.

www.charlescasmuscelli.com.au

Department of Planning and Environment.
GPO Box 39, Sydney NSW 2001



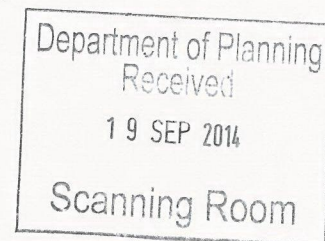
PCU55894

**Submission in response to the WestConnex M4 Widening Environmental Impact
Statement Volume 1 dated August 2014.**

1. This submission is made by me in two capacities;
 - firstly as the Member for Strathfield who's constituents are affected by the EIS either as users of the M4 or as the local community impacted by its environmental effects, and
 - as a former "NSW Roads" senior executive working for the Roads and Traffic Authority with substantial subject matter expertise on the operational management of roads.

Background.


2. Preceding the announcement by the Government of its commitment to WestConnex there was, and continues to be, a steady stream of community concern focussing on traffic congestion and public transport. The congestion issues included;
 - Access into and out of the Wentworth Point residential area,
 - Access onto and off the M4 at Homebush Bay Drive,
 - Traffic congestion approaching the round-a-bout at Homebush Bay Drive and Underwood Road.
 - Traffic congestion at the Centenary Drive and Arthur Street intersection.
 - Traffic congestion at the intersection of the M4 and Concord Rd.
 - Traffic congestion during times of major events at Sydney Olympic Park from all directions but especially along Homebush Bay Drive and Underwood Road.
3. All of these are entirely legitimate and they have attracted attention from RMS as a result of representations by myself and members of the community. This has included;
 - On-site meetings with senior executives of RMS facilitated by me.
 - Meeting with the Chief Executive of RMS.
 - Meetings with Roads Minister's advisors.
 - Meetings with WestConnex Delivery Authority executives.
 - Written representations from me and the Wentworth Point community.



Current Situation.

4. Responses to the concerns listed above are yet to be received from the appropriate authorities and it is my understanding that work progresses to investigate treatment options.

Phone: (02) 9747 1711 **Fax:** (02) 9747 6054 **Email:** strathfield@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Electorate Office: Shop 1, 54 Burwood Road, Burwood NSW 2134  facebook.com/CharlesCasuscelliMP

5. This delay to providing a “reasonable response” to their concerns, is causing significant disquiet amongst my community. Their view is that we continue to announce more and more development without any specific commitment to the provision of basic infrastructure. I agree with them.
6. As an example, however limited it may be, we have about 3,000 apartments currently in Wentworth Point with less than 1,000 in Sydney Olympic Park. The projected number will be over 22,000 with already announced proposals, the WP UAP, the SOP uplift and the Carter St UAP.
7. Even more will be announced soon by UrbanGrowth NSW as it rolls out its plans for the Parramatta Rd corridor, especially between Silverwater and Strathfield. I can understand their uneasiness.

Discussion.

8. With these challenges providing the framework for this submission I refer to;

Section 5.3.2 Intersections and Interchanges, paragraph titled Hill Road of the EIS.

9. The EIS proposes the addition of an eastbound on-ramp at Hill Road and an extension to the existing westbound on-ramp also at Hill Road. Both of these measures are supported and recognise the local demand for access to the M4 at Hill Road.
10. What is missing, and obviously so, is the M4 westbound off-ramp at Hill Road. The need for this is self-evident not only from a local access perspective but also to maintain the efficiency of the motorway by providing adequate traffic dispersal capacities into the arterial road network between Strathfield and Silverwater.
11. An argument that westbound traffic could use the adjacent interchanges at Silverwater Road and at Homebush Bay Drive does not adequately consider the additional, and unnecessary, traffic burden it would place on Parramatta Rd, other local roads and major intersections mentioned previously as already being under protracted periods of congestion. I believe, from my experience and observations, that the need for a westbound off-ramp is no less and no more than the need for an eastbound on-ramp and can be easily demonstrated.
12. It can also be argued that the increased efficiency of delivering traffic to interchanges by the M4’s duplicated carriageways carries a risk that insufficient exit capacity at Silverwater Road and Homebush Bay Drive will create traffic queues on the M4. More importantly it will also produce localised congestion at these major intersections with the arterial road network. This is simply because of the capacity constraints at Silverwater Rd and Homebush Bay Drive.
13. It is difficult to understand how all of the proposed development already announced for that area that would be serviced by the M4 westbound off-ramp at Hill Rd can be approved without this critical bit of supporting infrastructure.

Section 8.1.5 Assessment of potential operational traffic and transport impacts. Paragraphs appearing after heading “Cumulative traffic and transport impacts”.

14. Road planning professionals understand that the optimum return on the primary investment to widen the M4 can only be realised by adequate capacities and configuration of the arterial road network that connects to the M4.

15. Increasing the capacity of motorway ramps and the immediate signalised traffic signals without a broader assessment of the immediate downstream arterial road capacities and local roads in the immediate vicinity is counter-productive.
16. I have not observed an adequate focus on the “immediate” area wide traffic issues that will have a direct and substantial impact on local communities.
17. For example the proposed treatment of the Homebush Bay Drive interchange appears reasonable until questions are raised about Homebush Bay Drive’s connectivity with Parramatta Road and the performance of the Centenary Drive / Arthur Street intersection. If Homebush Bay Drive is also looked at from the perspective of connectivity with Underwood Rd and Sydney Olympic Park via a poor performing round-a-bout then the detail and conclusions reached in the EIS appear superficial at best.
18. Simply put it is obvious that a number of “enabling works” are needed to optimise the investment in the duplication of the M4 and ensure that local communities are not unavoidably impacted. I understand that these are not currently part of the WestConnex project but I would caution that unless these are identified now and rational decisions made then the local community will feel that their interests have become subordinate to all other interests.
19. More importantly it will allow better informed planning decisions. The two areas deserving of a more thorough investigation (area wide traffic management study) and inclusion in the EIS are:
 - The north south corridor intersecting with the M4 and aligned along Homebush Bay Drive from Rhodes to Strathfield South.
 - The north south corridor intersecting with the M4 aligned along Concord Road from Liberty Grove to Strathfield.

Redistribution of Traffic Due to Tolling.

20. The EIS makes a number of references to the likely redistribution of some traffic from the tolled M4 onto parallel non-tolled routes that will result in increased traffic volumes not only on Parramatta Road but also on other arterial and local roads.
21. These roads form part of the local community that are subject to immediate and ongoing increasing densities of development. The cumulative impacts from increased traffic volumes generated from local developments and traffic avoiding the tolled M4 have not been sufficiently considered as demonstrated by lack of detail contained within the EIS.

Recommendations.

22. The addition of a westbound off-ramp at Hill Road must be included as an improvement to the EIS.
23. A more comprehensive area-wide traffic management study be conducted of the two corridors identified at paragraph 19 to identify specific arterial road improvements that should be considered “strategic” in nature that will better inform planning decisions. It may eventuate that these are included within the WestConnex scope as concurrent works with Stage 1b delivery.



Charles Casuscelli RFD MP

Member for Strathfield

Chairman Transport and Infrastructure Committee