



## **Submission by Haberfield Public School Parents and Citizens Association**

### **In response to the Modification Report on exhibition, September 2018**

This submission is made on behalf of the Haberfield Public School P&C Association, which represents the parents and carers of the 650+ students at Haberfield Public School and other members of the school community, including local residents.

The school is located on Bland St, Haberfield, only a few hundred metres from the three major construction sites at the eastern end of the M4 East stage (Wattle Street portals, Parramatta Road Ventilation Facility and Parramatta Road portals). It is also only about 150 metres from two sites – known as the Muirs sites on Parramatta Road - planned for use in the M4-M5 Link stage beginning later this year.

Our community has felt the impact of WestConnex since 2014, when compulsory acquisition notices were issued to families whose houses were to be demolished to make way for the massive road development. Those families went through two years of immense mental and financial stress, and the rest of us have been suffering the consequences of noisy, dusty, dangerous construction since it began in 2016. This has led to significant health impacts (eg respiratory illness due to high levels of dust and high levels of stress for residents living nearest the sites); safety issues (eg near-misses between trucks and pedestrians at the Brescia site driveway on Bland St); and ongoing inconvenience (eg by WestConnex workers taking up much of the available street parking near the sites, or frequent changes to road conditions/available routes in the region). Our community feels demoralised and disempowered as a result of this development – and we still have four or five more years of construction, plus a ventilation stack as the legacy!

This submission is in response to the Modification Report lodged with the Department of Planning in September 2018, which provides an updated outline of activities at sites in Haberfield/Ashfield between late 2018 and 2023.

### **Parramatta Road East and West civil sites (Muir's sites)**

The community notes the joint venturers' decision not to use the two Parramatta Road sites for 24/7 tunnelling operations with appreciation. As we wrote in our response to the EIS and in many other communications, it was completely unacceptable to propose such activity only 150m from a primary school.

However, the revised plan still has major – and in some cases, significantly increased - impacts on the Haberfield and Ashfield communities. In particular, we still hold considerable concern about the safety risks associated with the modified plan. These include:

#### Traffic numbers

The Modification Report indicates 566 construction vehicles will enter and exit the two Parramatta Road sites each day, resulting in more than 1100 vehicle movements. This is a 70% increase on the 330 construction vehicles forecast to use the two sites in the original M4-M5 EIS. We also note there is a minimal reduction in the number of heavy vehicles expected to enter the sites at peak hour compared with the EIS, despite the reduced number of heavy vehicles overall.



The Modification Report provides an indicative layout of the sites which includes driveways on Parramatta Road, Alt St and Bland St except for Bland St, Haberfield. The report only provides total numbers of expected vehicles, but does not give any indication of driveway usage eg if the majority of vehicles are expected to use Parramatta Road or the side streets. It also provides numbers for business peak hours, but not for the peak school hour in the afternoon (2.30-4pm). This leaves us in the dark about the traffic movements at the time most critical for our students' safety.

As raised in all previous submissions to the Department, the roads around these sites are heavily used by students and their families to walk, cycle and drive to and from school. This significant increase in traffic to and from the civil sites will inevitably increase safety risks for these children and their families. We request:

- a condition of approval be put in place that the contractors must have staff stationed as monitors at all driveways during peak school transit times (8am-9.30am and 2.30-3.30pm)
- a condition of approval be put in place that construction staff are directed to use Parramatta Road as their primary route rather than Bland or Alt streets. We see significant potential for rat running through Haberfield and Ashfield to get to the sites, and want to limit the additional traffic on residential streets.
- removal of proposed driveway on Bland St, Ashfield.
- strict adherence to the 3-tonne limit on Bland St in Ashfield and Haberfield and significant penalties for drivers who do not comply
- consideration of opening up the temporary construction worker overpass to the public to enable students/families to choose to cross Parramatta Road at that location if they deem it safer than walking to the existing pedestrian overpass. We note that the bus pass is being moved closer to Bunnings, away from the Bland St/Parramatta Road intersection – if it is unsafe for buses to stop at this location, it is potentially unsafe for students to be walking here. This could be avoided for many pedestrians if they could use the worker overpass.
- the directive that no construction vehicles use Bland St, Haberfield to be enforced and penalties to be issued if drivers breach it. This directive was mentioned by RMS' WestConnex Director Andrew McKindlay at the CRG meeting on September 18.
- WestConnex/RMS fund a pedestrian crossing guard at the school's pedestrian crossing on Bland St for the duration of construction of M4-M5 Link.

We are especially concerned at the impact of this proposal on movement in Bland St, Ashfield. This road – particularly between Julia St and Parramatta Road – is already difficult to navigate for drivers and pedestrians: it is very busy, so narrow that cars have to slow down or stop to pass each other safely and usually packed with parked vehicles down both sides. It is also difficult to turn into when travelling west along Parramatta Road because of the structure of the tight corner, and has been the scene of several accidents recently. Increasing traffic on this road will inevitably increase the risks to drivers and pedestrians. In addition, we note that Woolworths is expected to commence construction of a new supermarket on the so-called Brescia site, directly opposite the Bland St driveway proposed for the Parramatta Road west civil site. This will leave our children and other pedestrians with no way to avoid driveways used by construction vehicles.

#### Workers parking in streets

We note that the provision of carparking at the civil sites is supposed to prevent construction workers parking in the streets and that it is a condition of approval for the M4-M5 Link that workers



park onsite. As raised on dozens of occasions by individual residents/parents, the school's Principal, in community forums and in all our submissions, worker parking has been a massive issue for our community since construction work began. It has caused significant inconvenience to local residents, led to major frustration for parents during drop-off and pick-up hours and increased the safety risks to students and families.

We seek further information about what penalties will apply for workers who continue to park in local streets rather than at the civil sites, and how this will be monitored and enforced by the contractors. We understand the Inner West Council has proposed the use of technology to ensure that workers do not park in residential streets and support that suggestion.

### **Northcote Street tunnelling site**

While we are pleased that tunnelling is not to occur at the Parramatta Road west site, we are conscious that extending the use of the Northcote St site for a further four years has a devastating impact on the residents living close to that site. We request that the conditions of approval include significant measures to ensure noise impacts are mitigated to a much greater extent than in the M4 East stage, and that strong penalties apply if the joint contractors do not abide by these.

### **Spoil haulage and Five Dock route**

We note with concern that the proposed modifications dramatically increase the spoil volume movement in Haberfield from both local tunnelling and transport from Camperdown. We object to the proposed spoilage route through Five Dock because of its impact on local residents and businesses, including Haberfield Public School families who live in that neighbourhood. We note that allowing spoil removal trucks to travel along Parramatta Road, rather than the City West Link, will impact on considerably more businesses and residents, who do not appear to have been widely consulted or informed of these changes. We also note that the use of the G-loop for the M4-M5 Link delays the return of Reg Coady Reserve to the Inner West Council/community has promised in the M4 East project – another betrayal of our community with no compensation.

### **Air quality**

Air quality has been a major concern for the Haberfield Public School community as a result of the WestConnex development to date. The monitoring station on the school site shows alarmingly high levels of PM2.5 (consistently sitting at least 25% higher than the annual average ambient air quality goal and unexplained by RMS, the M4 East project or the EPA) and we have been subjected to spikes of PM10 caused by dust pollution from the construction sites, most notably on April 9 this year.

It is not clear from the Modification Report what works will need to be undertaken at the Muirs sites to prepare them for their M4-M5 Link uses. We request that the conditions of approval include strict requirements to mitigate the effects of dust or toxic contaminants that will be released if demolition is to occur at the sites. We note the very high number of high-sensitive receptors within a 350m footprint of the Haberfield/Ashfield sites – more than 5,000 people.

### **Indicative nature of Modification Report and other shortcomings**

As on so many other occasions with the WestConnex development, the community is asked to respond to a report that contains drawings with 'indicative layouts' or where crucial information is still being prepared. For instance, the contractor is currently drawing up the Construction



Environmental Management Plan, the Site Establishment Management Plan and other plans, all of which will provide further and more concrete information but, as we understand it, are not open for community consultation. Given our experience over the past two years, this community has little confidence in the contractors' ability to manage traffic and access at its construction sites. We repeat our comment made in our EIS submission, that to produce these plans after the project has been approved, and in a process that does not involve community consultation, is insulting and extremely poor procedure.

**Cumulative impacts on Ashfield/Haberfield should be compensated by improved amenity**

The Modification Report reveals how the Haberfield community will suffer four more years of above-ground construction sites, spoil haulage, significantly increased traffic and all the other unpleasant and unsafe consequences of this development. And yet, this latest report does not include any more proposals to improve the urban design and community connectivity in the Haberfield region. There are still no additional parklands or improved cycling and pedestrian links such as those offered in other areas including Rozelle.

Once again, our community requests that this project focuses on the Haberfield/Ashfield/Five Dock regions and develops improved plans for pedestrian and cycling activity. In particular, we request that the project improves the links across Wattle St/City West Link between Haberfield and Five Dock (potentially including an overpass to ensure safety of students and families who cross here to get to/from school), and creates more pedestrian/cyclist crossings across Parramatta Road.

**14 day consultation period**

We object to the short length of time provided to respond to this Modification Report. Two weeks is an impossibly short period in which to raise the awareness and seek the views of several hundred families to the changed plans for the Muirs sites. We do not feel that this length of time reflects the significant nature of the impact on our community, or that it has allowed us to adequately gather and summarise the views of Haberfield Public School parents.

We also note that Haberfield Public School received no direct communication about the Modification Report until a week after the report was published. This was confirmed by RMS representatives at the WestConnex Western Community Reference Group meeting on Tuesday, September 18 – the first contact with the school's Principal was on September 19 after community representatives raised concerns about the poor communication. This raises serious questions about the extent of the community consultation/notification process undertaken for the Modification Report, and suggests many people whose comments may be useful do not know enough or have not had enough time to participate in this consultation period.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Modification Report. Please contact us if you have any further questions or would like to discuss any of the issues raised in our submission.

Yours sincerely

**Sherrill Nixon**

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Representative on the  
WestConnex Community Reference Group

**Vanessa Santoro**

President  
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