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THANKYOU FOR ALLOWING ME TO SPEAK AT THIS HEARING.

WHEN I READ THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THIS INQUIRY, I REALISED THAT THE SYSTEMATIC MISUSE OF GOVERNMENT AND CORPORATE POWER THAT HAS CHARACTERISED THE WESTCONNEX SCAM FOR A DECADE MUST HAVE CAUSED THE SAME HIGH LEVELS OF ANGUISH AND DISTRESS TO OTHERS SUFFERING FROM SIMILAR PROJECTS RIGHT ACROSS SYDNEY.

AROUND THE WORLD, AS WELL AS HERE IN NEW SOUTH WALES, INFRASTRUCTURE MEGAPROJECTS HAVE BECOME NOTORIOUS AS VEHICLES FOR MONEY LAUNDERING AND OTHER ACTIVITIES THAT ATTRACT MAJOR CRIME GROUPS.

GOVERNMENTS HAVE A CHOICE BETWEEN BUILDING THE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT IS RECOMMENDED BY EXPERTS AND GENUINELY SERVES THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITIES THEY GOVERN, OR SETTING UP INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS AS A MEANS OF SIPHONING BILLIONS OF DOLLARS FROM THE SALE OF PUBLIC ASSETS, THROUGH THE ACCOUNTS OF MAJOR CONTRACTING FIRMS TO WHO KNOWS WHERE, BEHIND AN IMPENETRABLE SCREEN OF "COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE", AND "STATE SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE" LEGISLATION THAT HOODWINKS THE PUBLIC AND TIES THE HANDS OF REGULATORY AND OVERSIGHT AGENCIES.

TOO OFTEN IN THE LAST 20 YEARS, THE NSW GOVERNMENT HAS CHOSEN THE LATTER COURSE.

THE FIRST PRIORITY OF THE INCOMING GOVERNMENT IN 2011 WAS RE-WRITING THE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND ASSESSMENT ACT SO AS TO DEPRIVE THE PUBLIC OF ITS RIGHT TO CHALLENGE AN INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT IN THE SUPREME COURT ON THE BASIS OF ITS LACK OF MERIT. REGULATORY BODIES ALSO LOST THE RIGHT TO WITHHOLD LICENCES OR CERTIFICATION FROM "STATE SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE" THAT HAD FAILED TO EARN THEM.

INFRASTRUCTURE NEW SOUTH WALES WAS SET UP AS A SUPER-DEPARTMENT WITH POWERS OVER ALL THE OTHER DEPARTMENTS, INCLUDING THE POWER TO STOP ANY INVESTIGATION OF MISCONDUCT OR CRIME RELATING TO THE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IT PRIORITISED.

WHEN GOVERNMENTS CHOOSE, OR ARE TRICKED, TO BUILD PROJECTS THAT PRIORITISE THE INTERESTS OF PEOPLE WHO PAY 'POLITICAL DONATIONS', OVER THOSE OF PEOPLE WHO PAY TAXES, THE CHARACTER OF THOSE PROJECTS IS INEVITABLY AFFECTED. NATURALLY, THE MANNER IN WHICH SUPPORT IS ALLOCATED AND ROUTES ARE CHOSEN FOR TRANSPORT PROJECTS WILL DIFFER, DEPENDING ON WHETHER THE PROJECT IS PRIMARILY FOR PUBLIC OR CORPORATE BENEFIT.

I LIVE IN AN AREA THAT HAS BEEN DECIMATED BY THE BRUTAL LAND ACQUISITION PROCESS FOR WESTCONNEX. HOUSEHOLDERS, BUSINESSES AND COUNCILS ALIKE WERE KEPT IN THE DARK ABOUT A SIXTY-YEAR-OLD ROAD RESERVE BEING REACTIVATED. DURING THE PROCESS OF BUYING A HOUSE IN BROWN ST, A LADY WHO RANG THE RMS TO ASK IF THE ROAD RESERVE IT WAS IN WAS LIKELY TO BE ACTIVATED WAS TOLD "NO, NEVER." A MONTH LATER SHE RECEIVED THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION NOTICE FOR HER NEW HOME.

STANDOVER TACTICS WERE USED TO GRIND DOWN LOCAL BUSINESSES AND RESIDENTS, INTIMIDATE THEM, DENY THEM RIGHTS THEY WERE ENTITLED TO UNDER THE JUST TERMS COMPENSATION ACT, AND WITHHOLD DEPOSITS THEY NEEDED TO RELOCATE.

ONE HOMEOWNER WAS ARRESTED FOR ENTERING HIS OWN HOME TO GET CLOTHING AND PERSONAL EFFECTS FOR HIS WIFE, WHO WAS UNDERGOING TREATMENT FOR CANCER IN HOSPITAL. HE WAS THROWN IN JAIL AND ONLY RELEASED A WEEK LATER, AFTER A JUDGE FOUND HIS MISTREATMENT TO HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY UNJUSTIFIED.

AT GOVERNMENT LEVEL, THE PLANNING PROCESSES FOR WESTCONNEX WERE A SHAM FROM THE BEGINNING. THE AUDITOR GENERAL'S 2014 REPORT REVEALED THAT THE ASSURANCE PROCESS WAS IGNORED INITIALLY, AND THEN CORRUPTED BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SYDNEY MOTORWAY PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE, ALSO HEAD OF RMS. WHEN THAT PROCESS FOUND THAT WESTCONNEX WAS BESET BY SO MANY SERIOUS DEFECTS THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO ABANDON THE PROJECT COMPLETELY, THE HEAD OF RMS WROTE A FORMAL LETTER TO THE MINISTER, DECEITFULLY TELLING HIM THAT THE PROBLEMS HAD ALL BEEN RESOLVED AND THE PROJECT WAS READY TO GO AHEAD.

EVERY TRANSPORT EXPERT WHO MADE ANY PUBLIC STATEMENT, SUBMISSION, OR REPORT CONCERNING THE MANY CRITICAL DEFECTS OF WESTCONNEX WAS IGNORED OR RIDICULED. WHEN TIM WILLIAMS, THE MAN MOST RESPONSIBLE FOR SOLVING THE CHRONIC TRAFFIC CONGESTION IN THE CITY OF LONDON GAVE HIS PROFESSIONAL OPINION ON WEST CONNEX, HE WAS PERSONALLY THREATENED BY THE ROADS MINISTER.

NOW THAT THE TUNNELS UNDER MY AREA ARE FINISHED, EVERY HOUSE, SHOP, AND BLOCK OF FLATS HAS MODERATE TO SERIOUS CRACKING. EVEN FAMILIES WITH HOMES MADE TOO DANGEROUS TO ENTER BY REMOVAL OF SUPPORT BY TUNNELLING HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE RUNAROUND BY RMS OR WESTCONNEX CONTRACTORS FOR YEARS BEFORE REPAIRS ARE DONE, IF ANY ARE. SURELY THE AMOUNT OF TAXPAYERS' MONEY SPENT ON DENYING RESPONSIBILITY MUST BE GREATER THAN THE COST OF REPAIRS BY NOW.