

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX
PROJECT**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Submission: Parliamentary Inquiry into Impacts of WestConnex To the Director, As a tax payer, and a resident of Newtown, which has already been severely affected by WestConnex, I wish to make a brief submission to the Inquiry into the Impacts of WestConnex.

1. The Original Reason for WestConnex and Cost blow out The original justification for WestConnex was the Sydney Gateway project, ie linking the ports, via the airport, to the west of Sydney. This project was completely lost in the ensuing debacle that has become WestConnex. The original cost for WestConnex, estimated by Infrastructure NSW in 2012, was \$10 billion. By 2015 the estimated cost for 'WestConnex' had blown out to \$16.8 billion, and this did not include the Gateway project. This is now estimated to be a further \$800 million. Further, it was revealed in May this year that the contractors for the project, CPB Dragados Samsung Joint Venture demanded an extra \$625 million in "contractor delay costs" and another \$79.7 million in "change costs". The demands over the years for the business case to be released, revealed redacted documents, and a total lack of transparency. The NSW Government has proved to be totally incompetent and irresponsible in using tax payers money for such a huge, now out of control, project. I would argue that there be total transparency and accountability by the NSW Government for the use of tax payers money on this project.

2. Governance. WestConnex is the largest infrastructure project in Australia. The NSW Government made a gross under handed transfer of responsibility from a Government authority to a private company, opting to sell a 51 per cent share. Transurban was able to bid on this without waiting for the ACCC report with regard to it's monopoly status. This is a cynical exercise for the benefit of business and not the people of NSW. I would argue that a project of this magnitude should be a Government controlled project.

3. Roads are not the answer The NSW Government is hell bent on wasting tax payers money on a road for which there is no credible evidence of reducing travelling time from the western suburbs, and will impose hefty tolls that will be unaffordable for many commuters. WestConnex will filter traffic into the city onto existing roads that will not have the capacity, and will result in gridlock in the city and surrounding suburbs, for example in Alexandria. Money would be better used on light rail that actually goes somewhere, more trains with more capacity, and more frequent buses, ie better public transport. I would argue the NSW Government should take note of reseach that shows major cities around the world have stopped building out of date toll roads, as they only lead to congestion, air pollution and slower travel times.

4. The heartbreak this project has caused. The loss of so many heritage listed houses, hundred year old trees and green canopy, the the displacement of residents with indadequate compesation, the loss of property value in affected areas, the damage done to existing properties, ie house cracking, subsidence, have all resulted in loss of quality of life, loss of money and irreparable damage to individuals and communities. The construction of a 'spaghetti junction' over the southern end of Sydney Park, will result in a park with concrete roads over the top of it. A further loss of green space, and a blight on the environment. I would argue the St Peters interchange be completely moved so that Sydney Park is left as the park it was meant to be, and not a park under a concrete roof.

Conclusion The issues surrounding this most egregious project are huge, and will no doubt be addressed in many submissions to this inquiry. To sit down and address each and every one of the issues that are of monumental concern is beyond my capabilty at this time. However, I hope that the issues I have briefly raised here, ie the purpose of the project, lack of transparency, the human, environmental, and social cost, and the reckless spending of tax payers money, will be considered [REDACTED]