

Submission
No 44

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX
PROJECT**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 10 August 2018

Partially
Confidential

Inquiry into the impact of the WestConnex Project Submission

Dear Committee,

I would like to commence by letting the committee know that I have been a resident of the Inner West in Leichhardt and Haberfield for over 50 years and feel compelled to lodge a submission of my experience of the Westconnex project, predominately the impact and observations as an affected resident in and around the M4 East section.

As background I have successfully delivered projects to the value of \$480 Million, my expertise is project management, operations and business benefit delivery, and compliance as a Senior Executive. I have worked in the public sector for 11 years and currently in the private sector for over 20 years.

Lack of resident involvement and acknowledgment

Whilst I and multiple residents in our area made submissions on the M4 East section of the final design, tabling concerns and possible suggested amendments, this appears to have fallen on deaf ears, with no formal acknowledgment of our concerns being received. We were only advised at various information session and resident-requested meetings that residents had been consulted, and ample feedback opportunities were made available to residents. Something that had clearly not occurred. In fact we were advised that there were little to no responses to request for feedback by residents even though I am aware of many submissions being made.

We were advised specifically, that during the notification period, feedback was obtained via a door knocking consultation process in the impacted areas. The door knocking took place during business hours when the majority of residents were at work, and so it was of little or no use as minimal feedback would have been provided.

I also wrote to **The Hon Minister for Western Sydney, Westconnex & Sport, Mr Stuart Ayres; The Hon Minister for Planning, Mr Anthony Roberts; The Hon Premier of NSW, Ms Gladys Berejiklian; CCing, the local member for Summer Hill, Ms Jo Haylen**, on the 18 January. 2018; only for a standard response to be received with the primary point being made that it was the responsibility of Westconnex, and not acknowledging or answering the concerns of residents. It should also be noted that this template-based response took over 5 weeks to be sent to me.

My request also included information and views of the most affected residents, specifically that their concerns not to have a 5-metre noise wall was clearly being disregarded. Any request for a mutually accepted resolution or outcome was ignored by the Westconnex joint venture team, any program director and the Ministers and premier responsible.

At several local community-initiated meeting with Westconnex CPB Samsung John Holland Joint Venture WestConnex M4 East teams, regarding the noise wall concerns we noted that it took an extremely long time to respond to, let alone address resident concerns. For example the initial meeting was held on 2 February 2018; however an response regarding our concerns over the noise wall was not received by residents until 19 April 2018 – a period of over two and a half months. At this time the Westconnex joint venture team simply reiterated it would be proceeding. For all intents and purposes this appeared to be a tactic of stonewalling residents.

Lack of accountability, governance and review

Whilst there is a Westconnex-provided hotline, which I have called numerous times because of the double parking of trucks in residential streets, rubbish being left behind by contractors, excessive noise, dust, etc., not to mention the expense of having to repair four tyres as a result of construction detritus left on public roads and potholes created by heavy machinery and trucks, I am unsure where these complaints and concerns go. In all circumstances calls are transferred to the Westconnex CPB Samsung John Holland Joint Venture WestConnex M4 East teams; the people actually being complained about. Cynically this seems the most unlikely place to send complaints as they would be the most unlikely party to respond to these impartially. A fact borne out by the evidence of what has occurred to the residents in this instance.

There appears to be no accountability whatsoever with the Westconnex CPB Samsung John Holland Joint Venture WestConnex M4 East team, in that they always seem to state that dust, noise and work is "within allowable levels" irrespective of the damage they are doing.

This rote and automated response was questioned recently by myself when dust had become too intense, saturating most of my property. I requested to know where the air quality monitoring equipment was located and how was it being measured? I have an asthmatic son and his health has been impacted and deteriorated with the onset of Westconnex work in our street.

Information on such requests as location of monitoring equipment and dust and noise levels, are met with "it will be investigated", however the lack of any tangible response (other than the automated standard non-committal response), let alone no clear or obvious improvements or abatement of the problems can only be considered lip-service on the part of the Westconnex team. That the self-governance of the Westconnex CPB Samsung John Holland Joint Venture WestConnex M4 East teams is simply failing as it is simply brushing aside, ignoring or patronisingly brushing off the concerns of affected residence.

It appears evident that very little investigation ever takes place and constant reference to the "DP" or "Plan", or even notifying the Minister responsible, seldom happens. This leads me to believe that nothing is being done because to do so would cause delays, therefore it is better for the Westconnex team to ignore or disregard residents' concerns. It is my belief that the project/ program director is advised of the discontent of residents as no representation or contact has ever been made from this area.

Ultimately it leads me to question how there can be any reasonable or actual governance of the entire program with the Westconnex CPB Samsung John Holland Joint Venture WestConnex M4 East teams managing complaints whatsoever. There is no incentive to report concerns of residence; in fact it is actually in the best interests of the Westconnex team to ignore complaints as this provides bad publicity and potential causes delays to the delivery which could affect future tenders. It provides no independent oversight over problems in this process which is contradictory to the principles of acceptable governance.

Noise pollution, Environmental impacts and damage

When looking across my front veranda, I was once able to see a nature reserve with verdant vegetation, trees, and further beyond that a creek, and Timbrell Park. Now we are met with an unwanted noise wall that looks like the old Berlin Wall dividing East from West. It is visual pollution and was totally unnecessary. Also, the removal of eucalyptus trees to facilitate a noise wall between Waratah and Crane Ave, Haberfield has been a significant loss to the beauty of the visual environment.

Further, the unnecessary removal and damage of century-old Federation homes throughout Haberfield, for example on Martin Street and Wattle Street, as well as the wanton destruction of native fig trees along the Iron Cove Creek has severely damaged the overall aesthetic of the area. This was apparently mandated to enable truck turning and storage areas, of which I have seen no evidence to suggest was necessary. It has been detrimental to the emotional wellbeing of long-term residents, especially families and the elderly, formerly of a quiet, green suburb of beautiful gardens who are have either been displaced altogether, or for those remaining, subject to chaotic traffic and traffic jams, people traversing formerly quiet suburban streets to escape congestion ('rat-running') and poor air quality issues.

These air quality issues will also continue post-completion of the Westconnex due to the creation of controversial unfiltered air stacks that have been incorporated into the design of the project, and will also ensure ongoing respiratory issues, and the prevalence of hazardous vehicle particulate emissions that will be contained to a confined area. <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/-/media/epa/corporate-site/resources/air/vehicle-emissions.pdf?la=en&hash=CC1CC350EC56C59507CAE2A85899E8E98566224B>

My home and motor vehicles are constantly blanketed in dust and dirt and the noisy nightwork has caused residents countless sleepless nights. Even with spacing out works the noise carries considerable distances throughout the area – no record of noise pollution levels being accessible either to date.

In concluding I would be happy to make myself available for comment and even attend the inquiry in person should that be required to voice my concerns in person and answer any questions.

Regards