

**Submission
No 86**

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX PROJECT

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I strongly urge you to reconsider the entire Westconnex project as it is fundamentally flawed. It cannot achieve its main goal which is to relieve congestion and facilitate transport, it will in fact do the opposite, it will invite more cars onto the road and divert funding away from the only option that can move people around the city and that is public transport. To be specific: The business case does not properly consider alternatives such as public transport and demand management.

The budget is now \$16.8 billion – a 68% increase on the original estimate. A project of this scale, using taxpayers funds, should be subject to rigorous assessment but both the NSW Auditor-General and Infrastructure Australia have criticised the governance of this project. Hundreds of homes, businesses and parklands will be compulsorily acquired. It is diverting funding from public transport which is desperately needed across Sydney.

WestConnex will turn Rozelle into a dumping ground for toxic exhaust fumes with three unfiltered exhaust stacks at the Rozelle Rail Yards and one at Victoria Road at Iron Cove Bridge just metres from homes and a primary school. I also oppose the sale of the Sydney Motorway Corporation (SMC) prior to the public exhibition of a definitive, buildable, affordable design + an updated Environmental Impact Statement for the Rozelle Interchange (Stage 3B of WestConnex). In 2017 SMC failed to find a construction company prepared to build the complex Rozelle Interchange outlined in its Stage 3 EIS. The Interchange has now been handed back to RMS, which has short-listed two consortia (JCL and SCS) to design and construct it. The public must be informed and consulted about any alterations or simplifications to the highly conceptual designs approved in the initial EIS.

Western Harbour Tunnel Some of the most dangerous toxins in the world lie at the bottom of Sydney Harbour – the legacy of 150 years of heavy industry and environmental disregard. 400,000 cubic metres of toxic sludge are proposed to be extracted from the harbour floor for the Western Harbour Tunnel, jeopardising the marine environment and the health of the harbour via potential 'toxic plumes'. The sludge is to be dried on shore at White Bay, imposing unacceptable health risks to residents in surrounding areas from airborne toxic pollutants. Property Damage Construction of the proposed Rozelle Interchange and Western Harbour Tunnel would cause substantial property damage due to subsidence. These are heritage areas, with the vast majority of houses built on 19th-century foundations totally unable to withstand the substantial subsidence shown on WestConnex's predicted subsidence plans for these areas.

Inadequate Ventilation for Long Tunnels It is accepted internationally that tunnels over 3km in length require transverse ventilation, as opposed to longitudinal ventilation (which is considered inadequate). Long tunnels which deploy only longitudinal ventilation (e.g. those 7-9 km in length proposed for Stage 3 WCX + Western Harbour Tunnel) can produce toxic in-tunnel and at-portal readings 50 times levels deemed acceptable by the World Health Organisation. There is no safe level for (fine particulate) PM10 and PM 2.5 air pollution (40 PM 2.5 particles are the thickness of a human hair). These invisible, toxic, often-carcinogenic particles pass through the lung walls into the bloodstream and the brain. They lead to substantial increases of death from stroke, heart attack, cancer and respiratory disease. The most vulnerable are the elderly, the very young and the unborn.

World's best-practice tunnel and stack filtration is essential. The 2006 Lane Cove Tunnel Inquiry recommended that all future NSW road-tunnel projects include within the call for tenders a requirement for tenderers to design and cost in-tunnel filtration as a component of the ventilation system. This recommendation appears to have been ignored.