

**Submission
No 96**

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX PROJECT

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Hi NSW government,

RE PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO WESTCONNECT IMPACTS

I am concerned about this project's significant lack of transparency regarding governance and its long-term impacts on this city, particularly in terms of travel time, liveability and productivity.

1. **LACK OF TRANSPARENCY / ACCOUNTABILITY.** It is not democratic and therefore it is unacceptable that taxpayers have lost their rights to understand key project aspects, simply because SMC is not subject to the same scrutiny as a government body. This is of critical importance given the significant costs involved and the long-term impacts of such a project. This is a key issue as it sets an sneaky precedent for our elected representatives who may wish to avoid a key part of good governance in our society: scrutiny of government.
2. **WESTCONNEX NOT PROPERLY ASSESSED AGAINST ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS.** The key issue that westonnex claims to solve is that of *mobility*. The issue of mobility is obviously not only solved by cars. In fact cars have been shown to address this challenge poorly. Study after study around the world have shown that in approx 2-3 years, that any travel-time advantages of road projects are lost as more people drive to capitalise on any initial time saving, bringing travel times back to where they were previously.... cars appear to fill the space. It follows the simple supply and demand rule: Increase the extent of supply (the roads) and the demand (the car numbers) will increase... car numbers are 'elastic', not fixed. To be providing a road solution to mobility problems in the 21st century will constrain our city into the future and is contrary to forward-looking approaches taken by other cities world wide.
3. **ECONOMIC:** To tie our city to a 1950's solution to a mobility problem is retrograde and wasteful: Roads only appear economically justifiable when the rolling stock (the cars) are an externalised cost and other issues like pollution and it's effects are not counted. Rail projects include the cost of their rolling stock, why should car-roads be able to do this? When a comprehensive (realistic) study is performed including financial externalities, roads/cars/tunnels have been shown to be poor value for money. It seems unthinkable that public transport has not been **THOUGHTFULLY AN INTEGRAL PART** of Westconnex or, for that matter for any mobility solution for this city: For example at a minimum, choosing westconnex tunnel locations, gradients and sizes such that they could be retrofitted for trains/mass transit with well-located stations in, say, 10 years.