

Submission
No 114

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX
PROJECT**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

PARLIAMENTARY ENQUIRY INTO THE IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX PROJECT

SUBMISSION from:

Glebe NSW 2037

I would like to make the following points regarding the impact of the Westconnex Project:

HERITAGE VANDALISM

As someone who works in heritage conservation, I am absolutely appalled, angered and sickened by the demolition of streets of historic Federation houses and their established gardens in the suburb of Haberfield to make way for WestConnex.

Haberfield is one of Sydney's two earliest planned garden suburbs (the other being Daceyville). The entire suburb was listed as a conservation area by the National Trust in 1979. Six years later, the Haberfield Heritage Conservation Area was gazetted in the Ashfield Council's LEP by the NSW government.

As this is a legally enforceable document, how was the demolition of streets of houses allowed?

This tollway cutting a swathe through the Inner West will forever be a shameful symbol of how little the State government cares about heritage, about character and the things that make places (and our city) special. Haberfield is special.

This should never have happened. It would never have happened if WestConnex had been instead EastConnex — that is, if a freeway had been planned to cut a swathe through the eastern suburbs of Sydney. Instead the western suburbs of Sydney yet again bear the brunt of development at an enormous and irreparable cost.

DISREGARD FOR COMMUNITY & ITS CONCERNS

The forced acquisition of people's houses in Haberfield and St Peters, has robbed people of their beloved homes and broken up established communities.

Our dog-sitter, who lived opposite Sydney Park, was forced to leave her character-filled Federation weatherboard home on a double-block. A trained horticulturalist, she had a productive and verdant garden that has now been obliterated. The small birds, including fairy wrens, who nested in the thickets behind her house have also lost their habitat. She had no choice but to accept market price for her house and now lives in a 1970s, characterless, brick veneer house in Arncliffe, which is all she could afford. Before moving out, she asked if she could take her house with her (moving it to a new block elsewhere), but for reasons that were never explained this

was not allowed. At a time when resources are precious, this is unfathomable, and not a sustainable option.

There have been reports that WestConnex workers were selling off items that have been salvaged from houses — such as mantelpieces and leadlight windows — items that the owners of the houses were not allowed to take with them. If this is correct, it smacks of a corrupt system.

DAMAGE TO THE ENVIRONMENT

As has been pointed out a multitude of times, building an expressway does not solve traffic congestion, but pushes the problem elsewhere. It remains to be seen how the Anzac Bridge — already chocked with traffic every afternoon from about 3pm — is going to cope with more cars being pushed onto it at Rozelle.

This means increased noise, pollution from unfiltered exhaust stacks as well as passing traffic, and stress for the road users and the residents of the area.

Putting money into public transport options, as civilised countries in Europe do, would have shown far greater care and foresight.

The loss of mature trees and verges lining roads around Alexandria, as well as Haberfield and elsewhere, will intensify the pollution created by all of those vehicles, as well as increasing the temperature of the suburbs and roads due to the loss of shade and tree cover. Instead of greening our city to make it more liveable, this government is doing the opposite —creating a barren and gridlocked urban environment.

LACK OF PLANNING

It seems astonishing that a project of this size and cost appears to be being planned as it proceeds, with innumerable changes. This no doubt has added to the spiralling cost and has created uncertainty and fear in certain communities.

QUESTIONABLE EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

A neighbour's son has been doing casual work (as a scaffolder) for WestConnex. He has noticed that many of his co-workers vanish after clocking on and only reappear at the end of the day to clock off, when they appear to be under the influence of drugs. If this is true, it's scandalous and something that ICAC will probably have to look into.