

Submission
No 120

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX
PROJECT**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

WestConnex Inquiry Submission

Dear NSW Parliament

WestConnex is an appalling waste of money with a budget that continues to blow out, diverting funds from public investments of much higher value. It should be stopped, immediately.

Right now, NSW has more than 80 bushfires burning, and it's winter. Our State is almost entirely in drought. And our dam levels are sliding rapidly. These are the effects of climate change. What Sydney needs is greater resilience as a city, and the means for all its inhabitants to prosper. That means massive reductions in its contribution to climate change. Sinking tens of billions of dollars into new tollroads is not the answer. For the first 10 years of its life, WestConnex can not perform well because there is inadequate capacity on adjoining roads. Thereafter, it will not be needed because we are seeing profound shifts in mobility, led by car-sharing and massive changes in work arrangements.

Beyond the massive contribution of private vehicle use to GHG emissions in NSW, we know now that tollroads most affect those who are least able to pay: offering free vehicle registration to some of these folks is a political sop, rather than a proper fix.

What Sydney needs is massive investment in a well-functioning and diverse public transport system, like other cities of a similar calibre across the world such as London and New York.

Worse, even the Auditor General agrees that the business case for WestConnex is inadequate. The governance of the project has been criticised by key agencies at both State and Federal levels.

The compulsory acquisition process has been heartbreaking and unfair.

Worse still, the design of final stages is not buildable, and the EIS makes clear that the proponents really do not know what the impact on existing homes will be. For the many homes already affected by the tunnelling, the procedures for reparation have been appalling and inadequate.

And then, should it go ahead, there's the matter of the unfiltered stacks and proximity to residential areas, especially primary schools.

Then, there's the matter of removing citizen representation across inner west councils for more than year and installing ex-WestConnex officials as local government leaders at a key point in the progression of this project.

In short, WestConnex represents all that is rotten and unethical about infrastructure decision making in NSW. The people of NSW deserve so much more.