

**Submission
No 174**

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX PROJECT

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The WestConnex idea is deeply flawed. Instead of wasting billions of dollars on a mode of transport that will so soon be obsolete, this State desperately needs to focus its tax payers' dollars on public transport. The trains I take to and from work every day are routinely packed to the gills - so much so that one can hardly enter them on weekdays, so overcapacity are they. People my age have to stand up for the entire journey - regularly there are 51 or more people - I gave up counting beyond what I could see - jammed into the vestibule area between the steps up and down into the main carriages, into an area with seating for eight. The main body of the carriages are equally overrun - by two or three times more than the trains are designed to carry, with everyone standing cheek by jowl filling every square centimetre of corridor, every morning and every evening. It's a total nightmare and I dread routinely using the trains but there is no functioning alternative. I have to leave a whole hour to get from Burwood to Five Dock (which should take ten minutes) to see my doctor because the buses are jammed in the traffic and their arrival times at any given stop have no relationship at all to the scheduled times published on the so-called timetables. The public transportation system is an absolute mess, and I have never seen a single politician on a train or bus. (In Toronto, former Sydney Trains employee, Andy Byford, who went to head that city's Toronto Transit Commission (he now runs New York's subway system), would ride the streetcars and subways every day with his ID badge on so that he could get feedback from passengers. Ever seen Ms Berejiklian or Mr Constance identifying themselves to passengers or submitting themselves to the daily nightmares most of us who can't afford cars have to endure on a daily basis? The WestConnex is the biggest white elephant I can think of in a city whose public transport infrastructure is one of the worst of any major city I can think of or have experienced. I have tens of photographs of the crowds at stations and on trains, and front-line station staff are fuming because they are never listened to by senior management or the politicians as to how bad the conditions have become. And this is on an average day - when there's track work or a systems failure, which happens a lot as a result of chronic under investment, conditions deteriorate yet further. Get the cinema screens out of the underground train stations, get the private advertisers' clutter out of our public spaces, invest mightily in more frequent trains and buses and abandon the WestConnex project now before it attains official status as the greatest waste of money in the history of an entire nation.