

**Submission
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INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX PROJECT

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WestConnex has been a project of dubious merit conducted in a shroud of secrecy. It should not be compared or related to motor vehicle trips on the current road system. WestConnex expenditure can only constructively be related to comparable expenditure on an efficient, effective, affordable public transport system which would serve the city of Sydney into the distant future.

To commit Sydney to a future of the private car is to ignore the realities of urban planning as acknowledged almost uniformly in the developed world. The motor car is not a necessary evil; it can be supplanted in the public mindset by an effective public transport system. If government is conspicuously owned by the motor vehicle industry, the public is neither led toward a sustainable future, nor served in an affordable, sustainable manner.

The public relations industry has fashioned over 110 years an image of the motor car as the great liberator. This may have been a valid image at one time; it is today a fraudulent misrepresentation of the modern urban agglomeration. The reasons are many, and few uncontestable arguments can today be made for reliance on the private motor car.

1. Subsidies for the private car and its infrastructure are far greater than those which are and need to be committed to public transport.
2. Public transport is presented as inefficient because it is not constantly running at 100% capacity. Few motor cars run with more than one or two passengers.
3. Pollution is a major effect of the internal combustion engine, and cannot be reduced significantly further by technology. Public transport can rely upon power generated in areas more able to neutralize the environmental impact, and can even be powered by renewable power sources.
4. PR contentions that a major switch to an efficient public transport system would be very costly are true, and irrelevant. Governments must have the courage to invest in a sustainable future. Mass transit systems would be effective and readily maintained if built to the specifications of experts rather than consultants.
5. Government in NSW has been poorly advised in its choices regarding road and tunnel construction in the form of public-private partnership. These comprise an ancient shell game, which is to privatise profits and socialize losses. The traffic projections of

private contractors wanting to construct tunnels such as the Lane Cove Tunnel and the Cross-City Tunnel have been blatantly fraudulent. Despite this, public money has underwritten the income from their grotesquely inflated toll projections at staggering cost to the treasury of NSW.

6. The evidence of the past years is that the WestConnex system is being developed without a coordinated plan in place. The disastrous effects on communities, schools, parks, families whose homes have been expropriated at an unsatisfactory price is ubiquitous. The willingness of government to allow unfiltered stacks to pour toxic pollution into the air to be breathed by schoolchildren is most astonishing. No communities should have this poison imposed upon them.

That government has treated the community of NSW with utter contempt by withholding business reasoning, planning information, etcetera has been offensive in the extreme. Government in secrecy is not democratic government.

WestConnex is a poor and ultimately ineffective solution to the problems of Sydney transport. It serves the interests of the developers, not those of the citizens of Sydney and New South Wales.

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