

**Submission  
No 216**

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX  
PROJECT**

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The Westconnex project is a disgusting waste \$17 billion and counting. The State Government through secret deals and "commercial in confidence" agreements have undermined our Democratic process, favouring a destructive, polluting road project that favours TransUrban's monopoly instead of creating liveable city transport infrastructure that will benefit everyone & reduce climate changing emissions. These billions could also be used to provide much needed funds for the core business of State Governments- Education and public Health. Instead they are building 35 metre tall unfiltered extraction stacks to remove fumes from the tunnels. Sydney already has a problem with air pollution. Traffic pollution is an invisible killer. It is not being measured correctly and the fallout will belch out all over the Inner Western suburbs, over schools, preschools & playgrounds. Diesel exhaust is a carcinogen in the same class as asbestos. Invisible and odourless particulate matter penetrates lungs and ends up in the blood stream wrecking havoc on the young and the elderly. Green spaces have been proposed to surround these unfiltered exhaust tower where people are encouraged to exercise and play with their children. Counterintuitive for an organisation trusted with maintaining the health of the citizens of NSW. This is the worst risk to public health ever perpetrated on residents.

In a change from the usual Public Private Partnership arrangements the Government has volunteered to build Westconnex on behalf of the private sector, saddling taxpayers with all the financial risk. Tolls will benefit the owner for forty years to come with the whole project to be sold before its even completed, probably for a fire sale price. The tolls will increase by 4 % a year which is highway robbery. Wages are flatlining and there's probably a clause to guarantee profits that will again transfer funds from the public purse to private benefactors. It is the biggest misuse of public funds in Australian history. Public roads and motorways that are owned by the people are being tolled to pay for this Westconnex rort! The destruction/construction of Westconnex has destroyed communities with shocking levels of noise, dust and human suffering from forced acquisitions of homes with arrogant disregard for the lives of the people affected. Where was the business plan? Who ever thought that this was a good idea? Business donors to political parties and bankers who grow fat from interest rates!? Will there be any ICAC investigations into Nick Greiner's slide from Informed minister to Head of TransUrban or the many other criminal aspects of this ill conceived wrecking ball, ruining heritage, air quality and a physical danger to the whole Inner West.