

**Submission
No 220**

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX PROJECT

Name: Dr Greg Shapley

Date Received: 30 August 2018

Dr Greg Shapley

30 August 2018

Re: Parliamentary Inquiry into Impacts of Westconnex

Dear Public Accountability Committee,

I could write to you as a local resident to complain about many, many aspects of the Westconnex project. The noise, air pollution, stench, increased traffic, road closures etc., but instead, I want to you to consider the impact that this invasive project is having on children – especially the hundred and twenty or so children attending St Peters Public School and Pre-school.

This project has been highly disruptive for residents but at least as adults we can understand that the disruption is temporary. A couple of years is still a long time, but it will pass. Children on the other hand, can't understand this so readily (a couple of years is a long, long time), are more susceptible to contaminants and particulate (the pollution measuring station set up in school has demonstrated that at least on one occasion during school time the grounds were unsafe to be in as a direct result of localised works), and are being traumatised by the environment that they're being forced to inhabit. This last point is important: our children are exposed to an environment that will leave them psychologically scarred and physically unsafe.

Going to school in St Peters is far from a pleasant experience. The world inhabited by our children is a dystopia that we would not wish upon our worst enemy. Some of the elements contributing to this nightmare include:

- An all-pervading, intense stench of rotten-egg gas that lasts for days
- A variety of loud, persistent, intrusive noises, including digging machinery, trucks and drilling noises (including relentless underground 'thuds' that shake the ground)
- A huge increase in large-vehicle traffic that is unpredictable and often operates beyond the law (in that vehicles park illegally and drive unsafely)
- Road closures that often lead to the creation of detours that make side streets unsafe for children (for instance directing major traffic down Silver Street – a narrow road that goes past one of the school's entrances)
- Continual changes in pedestrian routes to school entrances (this is a change in routine that could be particularly traumatic for the children at the school with autism)
- The movement of families away from the school (some through the destruction of their houses, others just to escape Westconnex) leading to a loss of friends and social stability
- A huge increase in Westconnex related personnel (construction workers, traffic control personnel etc.) near school entrances leading to a heightened risk of 'stranger danger'
- Increased trip hazards and risk of injury from ill-placed signage and hastily-constructed road works
- Lock downs in the school as a result of unsafe environmental conditions (stench, dust or noise) leading to student anxiety

In this day and age, exposing our children to these risks is unacceptable. I urge the committee to act quickly to protect our children from these very real dangers.

Yours sincerely,

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