

**Submission
No 238**

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX PROJECT

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IN summary: GOOD GOVERNANCE and CONCERN FOR PUBLIC HEALTH ARE ENTIRELY ABSENT FROM THIS PROJECT.

What sort of project has NO business case RELEASED FOR PROPER SCRUTINY by members of the public and the parliament before the commitment of huge amount of public money???

The so-called "business case" finally released is unbelievable. The cost of the WestConnex project has been seriously underestimated and its forecast benefits overstated. Evidence for this statement is explained in considerable detail in the submissions made by the City of Sydney and by Rozelle Against WestCONNex.

The recommendations of the Audit Office of New South Wales and the Australian National Audit Office in regards to WestConnex both suggest that the project should not proceed 'until the business cases are thoroughly revisited for Stages 2 and 3.'

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The governance and structure of the WestConnex project including the relationship between Sydney Motorway Corporation, Roads and Maritime Services, the Treasury and its shareholding Ministers STINKS TO HIGH HEAVEN. Contributions made to both political parties by organisations in the business of providing infrastructure also need to be scrutinised in the light of the subsequent awarding of tenders for State Significant Infrastructure projects.

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Allegations of corruption levelled against key players such as CIMIC and AECOM in other parts of the world have led to these companies being banned from tendering while these charges are being investigated. Good governance suggests that the same approach should also have been applied here.

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Inaccurate and overstated usage figures supplied by AECOM on at least 3 other tollroad projects here have not been met, resulting in the shortfall being made up from the public purse. AECOM's figures for The Sydney Harbour Tunnel has cost NSW taxpayers over \$1 billion during the time of its operation.

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The compulsory acquisition and demolition of property for the project has caused considerable dislocation and distress. 41 of my neighbours' houses were demolished and OUR SMALL COMMUNITY OF ST PETERS has been RIPPED APART by the widening of a road (Campbell St) that will achieve NOTHING in terms of better traffic flow. One resident in Campell St was actually jailed for a week for refusing to vacate his family home.

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The relationship between WestConnex and other toll road projects including the Sydney Gateway, Western Harbour Tunnel, F6 and Beaches Link is apparent. Clearly it is one big interconnected project and the Sydney community knows that. The separate staging of each of these components, the use of private companies to hide detail from the public, the sham of the community information sessions and the blatant disregard of the 13,000 objections to Stage 3 alone, demonstrates that the Government is acutely aware that the public genuinely believes that WestConnex and similar tolled freeways aren't a solution and that a world class public transport system is desperately needed here in Sydney.

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Because of the secrecy surrounding the Project it is impossible to ascertain the extent of taxpayer liability now and into the future.