

**Submission
No 243**

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX PROJECT

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SUBMISSION TO THE NSW PARLIAMENT CALLING FOR THE
STOP TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF ALL WESTCONNEX TOLL ROADS
AND FOR PUBLIC MONEY TO BE ALLOCATED TO PUBLIC
TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE.

As a resident and property owner in Annandale, I am extremely dismayed at the Berejiklian State Govt for their **total disregard for the welfare of the people of Sydney** which they have demonstrated in the following ways;

1. Not doing a proper study into the current and future transport needs of Sydney. Public transport should be the main focus of new infrastructure as our city becomes more crowded and people will not be able to drive to work. In fact people generally would prefer fast trains and buses.

Personally I know people who drive into Annandale from the western suburbs via Parramatta Rd because they can't afford the M4 toll. Public transport is faster and cheaper and can move more people. For example 1,000 people could potentially be moved by

1 train	Public transport
15 buses	Public transport
250-1,000 cars.	Roads

2. Spending what is likely to be in excess of \$45b without taking any notice of the wishes of the people in the Inner West including Councils that are now having to spend thousands of dollars to mount protests to protect their suburbs from becoming "ratruns" as the toll roads disgorge 1,000s of cars at their door step. The proposal is justified by saying that it will enable people in the western suburbs to drive into the city but the western suburbs councils (as reported by the mayor of Parramatta in a speech at Sydney Town Hall 11th Aug) don't want toll roads. They want more public transport. Another problem is parking. There are no places for those thousands of cars to park if they do drive into the city.

3. The process of engaging with the construction company and the wholesale acceptance of the design has not been transparent. Communities have not been consulted. The Berejiklian Govt has no mandate to carry out such a massive infrastructure

program against the will of the people it serves. So one has to ask what is their motivation? Is it because it is a mad scramble to be seen to do something to remedy the deplorable state of our transport system so they have just agreed to a bad deal in haste without due diligence. The extensions of stages of Westconnex has been presented to us as a fait accompli as if the construction company needed to continue to find projects to keep the money coming in. There is no other rational reason for such a massive infrastructure project. The Berejiklian Govt was an easy target and we are seeing the proof of this in the way that they have complete disregard for how much money they are spending now and how we know from experience that toll roads suck money out of households for many years into the future. The current design has been accepted without any alternative proposals.

4. The Government refuses to acknowledge that tolls don't collect the revenue that's promised. Toll roads put an unfair burden on the household budgets of people who can least afford them. In Qld, NSW and Vic, people are refusing to pay tolls (mostly can't pay them) and because refusing to pay tolls is a criminal offence people are having to go to court over debts of thousands of dollars. What is more astonishing is that the courts are so clogged with these cases that even the magistrates are aghast at the waste of time and money to deal with non-payment of tolls while there is a huge backlog of family law cases often involving family violence. Is this a Government that prioritizes the welfare of its people??

3. Bringing thousands of extra cars into the city will cause increased pollution in the Inner West. To make matters worse, the proposed tunnel exhaust stacks will not be filtered. Nitrous oxide and particulates from thousands of extra cars will flow into our communities putting our health at risk. The stacks will impact on schools and day care centres as well as homes.

4. This Government does not care about the most important issue effecting our quality of life, Climate Change. The proposed Westconnex toll roads are not suitable infrastructure for the future. Cities of the future will not rely on private petrol-driven vehicles for everyday living. The solutions to transport challenges must include reduction of carbon dioxide emissions and building public transport to move lots of people efficiently while maintaining green spaces and reducing carbon dioxide emissions.