

**Submission
No 246**

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX PROJECT

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Parliamentary Public Accountability Committee Inquiry into the impacts of Westconnex

There are a number of concerns about the impacts of the WestConnex project from the point of view of local residents focusing on an overall lack of transparency and clarity, air pollution, traffic, the impact of the project on Rozelle, long term costs to NSW citizens and the cost of tolls to individuals over decades. In addition, compulsory acquisition and a pattern of under market value payments as revealed in the Desane judgement is concerning and requires further investigation.

(<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/blow-to-westconnex-after-state-loses-legal-battle-over-acquisition-20180501-p4zcns.html>)

Lack of Transparency and lack of information

As citizens, it is extremely difficult to find out clear and accessible information on the Westconnex project and its impacts, which is disturbing given it is the biggest infrastructure project in the Southern Hemisphere.

Impact on Rozelle Public School

My understanding is that the Tigers site in Victoria Road will become a massive open pit site extracting tonnes of contaminated spoil less than 30 metres from the Rozelle Public school playground. Of great concern is the expected five years of more than 5000 trucks and other heavy vehicles in the streets around the school, and non-stop drilling less than 20 metres underneath the school.

This is a quote from the EIS report:

[https://majorprojects.accelo.com/public/dee93437f1f11c5a2a000fbcdded123d4/001.%20M4-M5%20EIS Vol%201A Executive%20summary ToC Certification Glossary.pdf](https://majorprojects.accelo.com/public/dee93437f1f11c5a2a000fbcdded123d4/001.%20M4-M5%20EIS%20Vol%201A%20Executive%20summary%20ToC%20Certification%20Glossary.pdf)

“The main risks during construction would be associated with dust soiling and the effects of airborne particles on human health and amenity. Several ‘high risk’ activities were identified. For example, the assessment found that there would be a **high risk of dust impacts associated with activities in Rozelle**, in particular demolition works.”

The mitigation described as ‘standard practice’ does not seem adequate given the proximity to schools, childcare centres and local residents and businesses.

Have the impacts on the Rozelle Public School, local childcare centres, Sydney Secondary College, residents and businesses been studied and taken into account?

In particular, what are the health, psychological and educational impacts of a projected five years of construction inflicting dust, noise, vibration and traffic on children and residents?

What is the projection for truck movements near the Rozelle site?

What will be the impact on local traffic?

What is the plan for traffic management during and after the project's completion?

Given the enormous complexity of the planned Rozelle Interchange, described as 'spaghetti junction' and lack of interest in actually building it, how viable and achievable is it from an engineering and cost perspective?

Unfiltered stacks

The danger of unfiltered stacks was acknowledged by the Premier in 2008 in relation to the Lane Cove Tunnel. She called filtration of stacks "ethically right in the interests of ... health".

Why are filtered stacks, environmental best practice, not part of the plan?

What is the Government's position on filtration of stacks?

Why are not meaningful air quality monitoring measurements made publicly available?

Local Air pollution

From the EIS Report:

"A substantial reduction in pollutant concentrations was predicted along the Victoria Road corridor south of Iron Cove in Rozelle, due to surface traffic being diverted through the Iron Cove Link tunnel (*how has it been determined that surface traffic will be reduced?*)

However, there would be an increase in pollutant concentrations on Victoria Road to the north of the Iron Cove Link and near Anzac Bridge as a result of the general increase in traffic due to population growth and the project at that location."

Impact on local traffic and parking

What will be the impact on side street traffic during the project and after?

Western Harbour Tunnel

There is so little information on this, it's hard to comment meaningfully but the impact of tunnel construction on the harbour is deeply concerning with the obvious

potential to release heavy metals, and affect harbour marine ecology and water quality.

Compulsory Acquisition

This case has disturbing implications, not least of which the millions of taxpayers dollars spent in pursuing this case.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/blow-to-westconnex-after-state-loses-legal-battle-over-acquisition-20180501-p4zcns.html>

I note the judgement of Justice David Hammerschlag, “the road authority's intentions for the property were ill-defined and “may never be realised”.

Financial impact

The Sydney Morning Herald reported on 14/4/17 that a City of Sydney analysis had shown that:

“WestConnex and its connecting roads combined will cost more than \$45 billion, after the extra roads are added to the project's \$16.8 billion public price tag.”

What impact will the Government's decision to sell-off a majority stake in the project have? Particularly the costs of tolls to motorists over the next forty years?

What is the projected cost to individual motorists who must use these toll roads daily? It is reported as \$8:00 one way in today's dollars, a considerable impost. The SMH Reports (18/7/17): “In an era of low wage growth, the likelihood of tolls rising at a faster rate than inflation means a greater proportion of Sydney motorists' income will go towards paying charges for using motorways.”

Public Transport

Tax payers are paying billions of dollars for WestConnex. Drivers will pay tolls for decades.

Finally, what are the plans to increase and improve public transport in Sydney, surely key to improving congestion?

Yours sincerely,

Amanda Armstrong

