

Submission
No 259

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX
PROJECT**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 31 August 2018

Partially
Confidential

Submission: Public Accountability Committee inquiry into the impact of the WestConnex project:

(a) the adequacy of the business case for the WestConnex project, including the cost-benefits ratio

The business case and gateway process was poorly managed and reflected poor governance within the NSW – particularly the arrangements between the NSW Public Service and Public Office holders (Ministers and MPs).

(b) the cost of WestConnex project, including the size and reasons for overruns

From \$17billion to \$40 Billion and some say it's closer to \$70Billion...what is the actual cost?

(d) the compulsory acquisition of property for the project

I have met people who have had their homes acquired and who could not afford to buy again in Sydney, because the compensation was inadequate. I have met others who have fought the decision and have dug themselves into debt. Lives have been destroyed NEEDLESSY. This is not how a functioning Government should operate.

My grandmother lives in Haberfield. She is 94 and had to endure her daughter dying of Cancer over the last 12 months ON TOP OF the threat of acquisition. I cared for my Aunt during this time and this project has loomed over my family as a threat.

Our family has owned that house since 1956. If we had this house acquired it would end marriages and compromise my grandmother's last days. This project in its current form may do that anyway as I am convinced that the air quality in Sydney will be so heavily compromised by this project because of the increase in car use and gridlock that it could end her life.

(e) the recommendations of the Audit Office of New South Wales and the Australian National Audit Office in regards to WestConnex

I cannot believe that the Commonwealth report concluding that the \$2Billion Federal contribution should not have been given because of an unsatisfactory gateway process, was ignored by the Public office holders in NSW (LNP MPs) as well as the NSW Public service.

To have a check and balance on taxpayer funds and government spending ignored is EGREGIOUS. It also sets a terrible precedent for future projects.

(f) the extent to which the project is meeting the original goals of the project as articulated in 2012

As I understand it this project was meant to link Port Botany to the Airport. This particular link does not in appear in any plan or business case. This is baffling.

(c) consideration of 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

AND

(g) the relationship between WestConnex and other toll road projects including the Sydney Gateway, Western Harbour Tunnel, F6 and Beaches Link

The conflicts of interest in this project are particularly alarming. For example, Nick Greiner's role in Infrastructure NSW and his involvement with Transurban is a direct conflict. An individual cannot have represented one and then the other. Such conflicts should be examined and investigated by an Integrity Body, such as ICAC.

Public confidence is undermined in Government institutions when this happens. Serving one's Community from a position of public office should be a sacred privilege.

(h) the circumstances by which WestConnex and the Sydney Gateway were declared to be separate projects in 2017

AND

(i) the cost of the project against its current valuation as determined through the sale of the Sydney Motorway Corporation and whether it represents a good investment for NSW taxpayers

This was originally costed at \$17 Billion by the NSW Government and has blown out significantly to \$50Billion in 2018. It infuriates me that the NSW taxpayer will largely pay for this project and then have it sold and the NSW taxpayer will pay again through tolls.

That makes absolutely no sense to me and anyone would see this for what it is. A ridiculous proposition. Why pay twice?

(j) any other related matter:

I am a lay person, I am not a member of any party, but I love my home and my State and it INFURIATES ME to see it mismanaged, mistreated and worse set back 50 years and sunk into debt.

This project in short will have all of us:

- sitting GRIDLOCK instead
- dreaming about the bungling opportunity to build more public transport
- spending less time with our families and loved ones because we can't get anywhere
- not travelling and living in virtual ghettos.

I speak to uber drivers and other commuters about this every morning and afternoon. All of them agree with me and I do raise these points with them.