

**Submission
No 332**

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX PROJECT

Name: Mr Douglas Bennett

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The Director c/- Legislative Council
Standing Committee on Public Accountability
Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Submission to the Inquiry into the Impact of WestConnex

Name: Douglas Bennett

To the Director,

Please find my comments on the Inquiry into the impact of WestConnex based on the Terms of Reference as follows.

I agree to my name being published.

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

There is no case for Westconnex. It is just apart of the LNP's agenda to appease its political donors and disregard the wellbeing of the people of this state. The LNP are city planners worst nightmare.

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

Its ridiculous! Plunging the state into 17 billion dollars worth of debt over saving residents of Liverpool 15 minutes to get to work? Having toll roads that extend well into the future (beyond 2050)? Since when were Western Syneysiders more important than the rest of Sydney? the rest of the state? 17 billion is way too much for a solution that barely does anything. Its pathetic.

(c) 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

Its incredible that the governance and structure of the project consists of very few expert city planners, and instead just politicians who think that "more roads will solve congestion". On top of that, the government and governance of this project has been very shady.

(d) The compulsory acquisition of property for the project

Completley ridiculous. We should not be in a position where the government is acquiring property to build new roads. This is 2018. We know from the past what building more roads solves- nothing!!

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

I think its completley blown out of proportion and that the LNP state government clearly cannot handle the responsibility of such a project- massively overbudget and overdue.

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

I think it is truly shocking that so much time and money is spent on these massive road projects, while the sydney train and light rail networks are in a state of chaos. Is the message that the government wants to give the people of NSW that we should be driving everywhere? that public transport is not important and that instead we should all be driving to work?

(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

It is not a good investment for NSW taxpayers. If you look at NSW at a whole, this project benefits a very small percentage of NSW residents- and yet they spend 17 billion on it? effectively plunging the state into debt?

(j) Any other related matter

I am a UNSW City Planning Student and have done research on the impact of Westconnex. I have also attended council sessions regarding the project. What I have heard and what I have seen is horrific. Ventilation stacks across the street from primary schools? 24 hour construction with no regard for the people of the area? This project has been toxic from the get go. It is an environmental disaster as well as a poor, 1950s solution to Sydney's congestion problem. On top of that, the statistics that the Berjikillian government provides is in fact incorrect. The amount of time that commuters can save through WestConnex is no where near the figures that they have published. On top of that, even if the figures were true, who on earth would be willing to spend up to 17 Billion dollars of the states money just so people in Western Sydney can save 15/30 minutes on a trip to work? What about the rest of Sydney? What about the people of Newcastle? The rest of the people of New South Wales? How on Earth do they benefit from this 33 kilometre toll road? As a City planner, it infuriates me seeing politicians and government make these huge decisions that the experts have said is not the best solution. It always comes down to appeasing political donors over the wellbeing of everyday Australians. Westconnex is poison. Save Sydney and Stop it now!!

City planning and transport planning are crucial to the livability of cities- Politicians should not have so much power and control over huge matters and projects like westconnex- they do not have the expertise and are too susceptible to corruption. There needs to be more transparency when it comes to matters like this!