

**Submission
No 356**

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX PROJECT

Name: Dr David Watson

Date Received: 31 August 2018

31 August 2018

Legislative Council, Committees
NSW Parliament
6 Macquarie St
Sydney
NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam

Submission: Inquiry into Impact of WestConnex

My name is David Watson. With my partner Denise Corrigan I have worked as an activist for just over two years to oppose WestConnex. The more we have learnt, the more appalled we have become. Like Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore we believe that WCX is 'a social, environmental and financial scandal' which must be swiftly terminated.

In close collaboration with our tight-knit Callan St community here in Rozelle we've hosted screenings (*Tunnel Vision + Blight*) and mounted an anti-WCX exhibition (*Sensitive Receivers: Rejecting WestCONnex*) in our home studio, helped create the 20pp anti-WCX newspaper *Bottleneck!* (60,000 copies across the inner west), held regular information stalls in Lilyfield, Rozelle and Balmain, and (just last weekend) orchestrated a Public Meeting on AIR QUALITY in Rozelle. PDFs attached.

Because we are artists with a penchant for the visual and something of an aversion to lengthy screeds, our submission consists not of detailed scientific analysis, legal argument nor personal testimony, but of captioned artworks which relate (by turns subtly, stridently and satirically) to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.

Things are crook in Tallarook, Fred. We thank you for this opportunity to make a submission, and implore you to call those responsible for the debacle that is WCX to full account.

yours

Dr David Watson & Ms Denise Corrigan



Anon Ymous, 2018

Adhesive sticker (32 x 59cm) with an emphatic DIY-cut-up message to WestConnex from the people of the Inner West, exhibited on mail-holding/utility boxes across the Inner West Council catchment since May 2018

This large sticker's in-your-face shorthand conveys the public's displeasure at being force-fed a poisonous cocktail of fossil-fuelled product/waste – oil, coal-fired power, unfiltered stack emissions – at a time of global climate crisis. At regular street stalls over the past two years – at Orange Grove Markets in Lilyfield, outside Woolies in Balmain, and in front of Rozelle Public School – we have spoken to thousands of local residents about WCX's ill-conceived and poorly communicated plans. People (especially heavily-mortgaged, busy young families) appear exhausted, bamboozled by trying to keep up with WCX's smoke and mirrors, its metastasising stages, designs and rationales. The sticker's heightened, over-the-top graphic captures the helplessness and impotence many residents are feeling, besieged by slick government spin (glossy brochures, colourful animated 'Tomorrow's Sydney' ads on high rotation in cinemas and on prime-time TV) as more and more community dislocation, erosion of amenity, clandestine home acquisitions, confidentiality clauses, drill rigs, traffic disruption, construction noise and air pollution are thrust down their throats. This contempt for the public – residents fear – will only escalate should the government proceed with its mooted sale of 51% of the Sydney Motorway Corporation. Once multi-billion dollar tollway projects are in predominantly private hands, the public will have little to no recourse, as multi-national corporations rule. Deal-making 'sweeteners' (like the 43-year M4 tolling concession being offered to the successful purchaser of SMC – despite the fact that the motorists of western Sydney will have fully paid for that tollway by 2020) are yet another (unbelievable) 'inconvenient truth' of this government's opaque public-private (snake-oil-sale-style) partnerships, in which the public interest is guaranteed to run stone-cold last.



Anon Ymous, 2016

Adhesive 'bin sticker' (42 x 30cm) for Inner West Council rubbish bins. The gas-mask graphic, which re-purposes the RMS's 'mother & child crossing' safety signage, first appeared in early 2017. It continues to be wheeled out on 'bin night' by inner west residents, and exhibited on council bins in municipal parks and public spaces.

No sophisticated city in the world is building tollways for fossil-fuelled vehicles *into* its built-up residential urban zones. Many are pulling down inner-city motorways, some are excluding cars via pollution taxes, others are making public transport free. As WestConnex cuts a remorseless swathe through built-up inner-city suburbs and commences construction close to schools and child-care centres, community concerns re air quality have amplified. Medicos like RPA's Professor of Respiratory Medicine Dr Paul Torzillo and north shore specialist Dr Ray Nassar have spoken out regularly in 2017/18 re the public health risks of vehicular air pollution (particularly for the young, elderly, chronically ill, and the unborn). There is also a paucity of reliable air-quality monitoring close to the sites of greatest concern (*no* air quality monitor anywhere in the entire City of Sydney + the one nearest us in Rozelle sits under a tree in Callan Park, over 500m from Victoria Rd/Rozelle Public School). Citizens wishing to keep an eye on local air pollution levels have discovered that real-time data displayed by government consultants (e.g. Ecotech) disappears after one month, effectively dis-enabling meaningful cumulative or comparative research. An affordable low-tech citizen-science initiative looks set to challenge the status quo. Emerging medical research into the health effects of air pollution is seriously alarming: <https://vimeo.com/278243564>, <https://bit.ly/2BRSFP5>. With WCX currently refusing to consider either stack filtration or sophisticated (transverse) long-tunnel ventilation, the public health costs of vehicular pollution, recently dubbed 'the new asbestos' by Dr Ray Nassar, must urgently be factored into any responsible cost-benefit analysis of WCX.



Matt Golding, 2017



WARATAH



CLASSICS

STUART AYRES

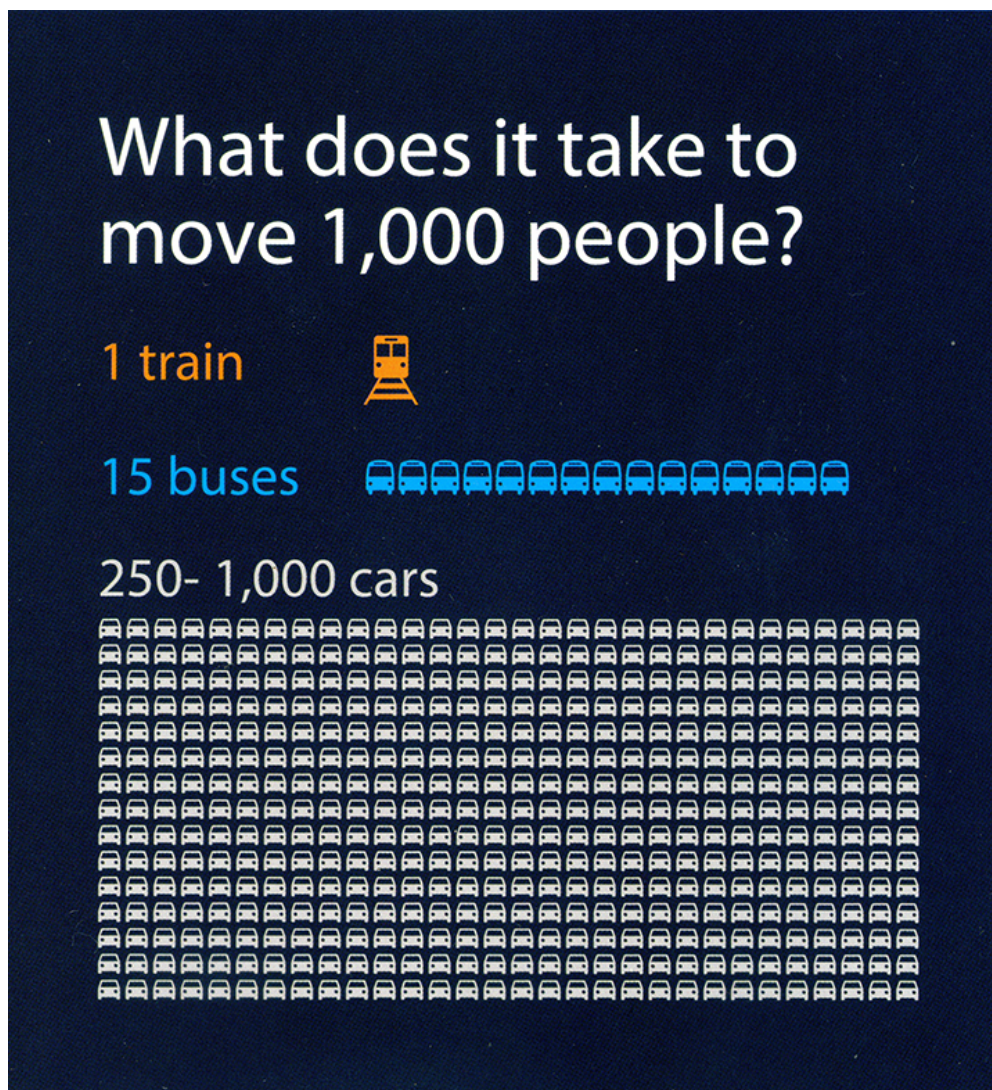
What even is public transport?

Rozelle Book Club, 2017

Satirical book cover (118 x 79 cm) currently on show @ Liquorland Gallery, cnr Victoria Rd and Springside St, Rozelle. The gallery itself is an intervention by local artists upon the walls of their beloved long-time (1986-2018) drive-in Liquorland bottlo (acquired by RMS 6/18, and 'cleared' way before time to give the impression that Stage 3 WCX/Iron Cove Link is well underway): <https://www.facebook.com/NoWestconnex/posts/1391507217658349>.

Stuart Ayres is the Minister for WestConnex.

Perhaps the most egregious crime of WCX is that it has been bulldozed through by politicians hand in glove with corporate mates and compliant bureaucrats without *any* consideration of public transport options. The idea that it is OK – at a time of global climate crisis – to construct the southern hemisphere's two largest US-style spaghetti-junction interchanges – to encourage polluting, largely single-occupant car journeys into a city with nowhere to park – is in itself ludicrous. The notion that this might be allowed to happen without achieving *either* of WestConnex's originally stated aims (to take freight from and to Port Botany), and to connect to Sydney Airport (seemingly reasonable objectives) is nothing short of scandalous. Just this week the Victorian Labor Government announced an ambitious \$50 billion underground rail blue-print for Melbourne. Our benighted city, too, is crying out for world's best practice, sustainable public transport to be fast-tracked.



2016 campaign graphic (70 x 59cm)

HABERFIELD

PETER JONES

Sensitive Receivers



ST PETERS

ROZELLE



Rozelle Book Club, 2017

Satirical book cover (118 x 79 cm) currently on show @ Liquorland Gallery,
cnr Victoria Rd and Springside St, Rozelle.

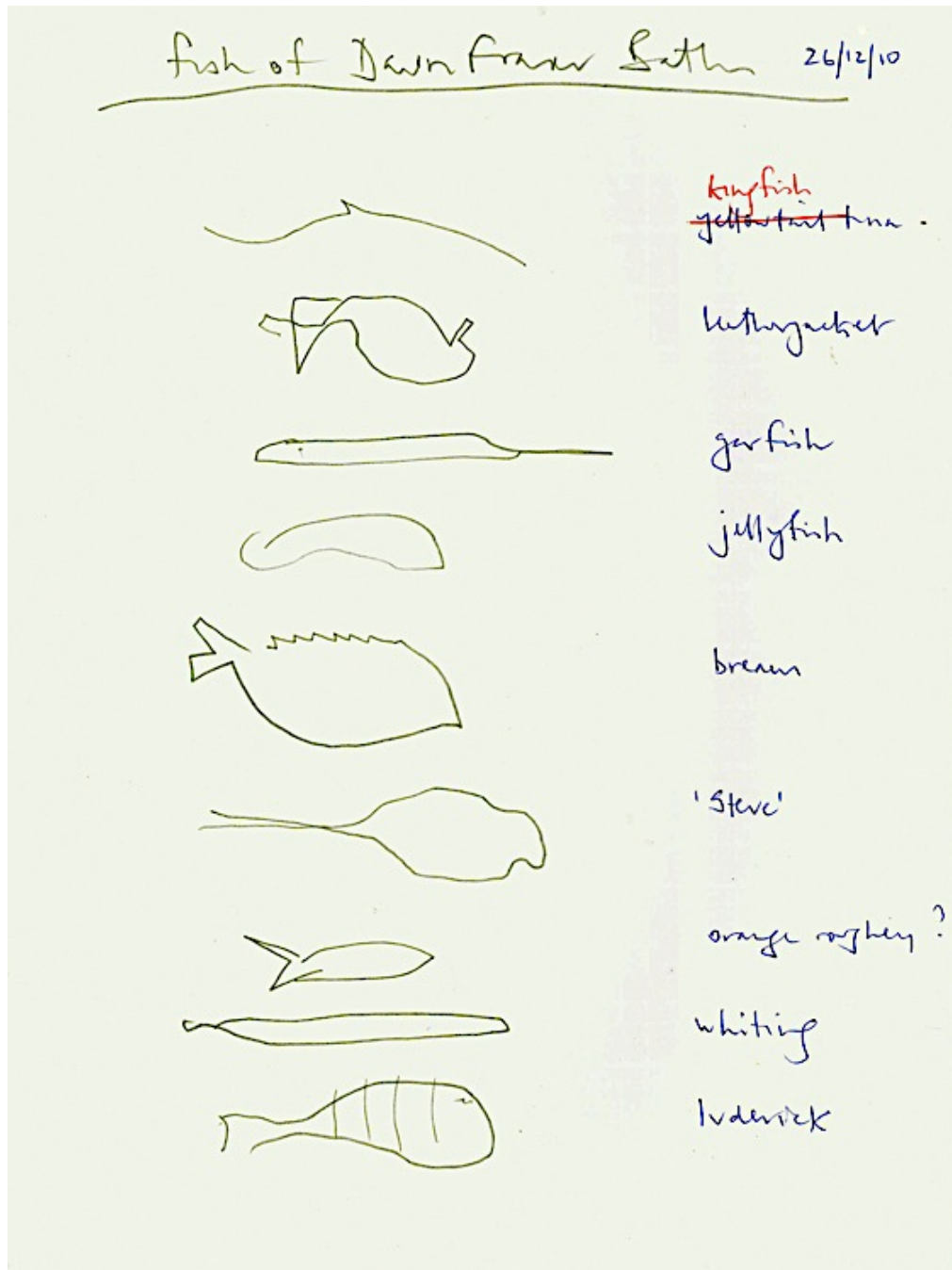
Peter Jones is WCX's Project Director, M4-M5 Link.

The book title 'Sensitive Receivers' is a play on WestConnex's own beige jargon – *sensitive receivers* are those 'in the zone' – people, homes and businesses under threat from the gargantuan tollway's proposed routes across and beneath Sydney, those whose close-knit communities are being insidiously neutered, whose health and environmental amenity face years of disruption, dust, noise and vibration. Having trashed Haberfield and St Peters, WCX has Rozelle well and truly in its sights. But there's an election in March and, as recent events in Canberra have reminded us: *a week's a long time in politics*. A 'hung' NSW parliament would be nice! The unacceptable wreckage to community, environment and heritage which the WCX juggernaut has wrought across the inner west over the past two years ought to have seen it scrapped well before now. In October the Upper House Inquiry will hear a litany of execrable tales: people bullied, under-paid, trampled and ignored by the RMS, whole streets razed, grand trees butchered, social fabric irreparably rent. Here in Rozelle, where the actual destruction has barely begun, people are already suffering. Clandestine property acquisitions with confidentiality clauses (27 on Victoria Rd alone) have pitched neighbour against neighbour, and a climate of obfuscation (in the absence of fair-dinkum up-front communication) has seen families forced to move on from loved homes and street communities based merely on hearsay and suspicion. Such dastardly pressures applied to people's already busy lives have generated an exhausted and despairing populace, sadly aware of its own lack of agency. In 2017 Callan St eschewed its annual Xmas street party for the first time in two decades. If WCX had a better 'smell'... if, for example, there was an independent transport professional anywhere in Australia who had a good word for it, or if it was generally accepted that pouring an additional 45,000 cars each day into bottlenecks already at capacity (e.g. Iron Cove Bridge, Anzac Bridge) was a smart new traffic-busting idea, then we 'sensitive receivers' might just be prepared to wear the pain for the greater good. But it doesn't, so we're not!



Marg Carter, Janette Willett, Holly Gorman and Peter Hehir, 2017

This hand-painted protest banner (100 x 400cm, acrylic on sail-cloth) has featured at numerous public events over the past year... outside NSW Parliament House, at transport rallies, on bridge actions at White Bay, and at regular community stalls across the zone.



David Watson, *Fish of Dawn Fraser Baths [drawn in the dark]*, 2010

I swim most mornings in Sydney Harbour with whiting, bream, leather jackets, mullet, garfish, and schools of tiny prawns. I often think how poorly we know our fellow residents. Since commercial fishing was banned west of the Harbour Bridge due to dangerously high dioxin levels in 2009, Dawn Fraser Baths in Balmain has seen a resurgence of marine life. There are sea hares, jimbles and, reputedly, even sea horses (although I'm yet to see one).

The Harbour, home to an incredible 576 marine species, is also one of the most polluted estuaries on earth due to the unmitigated assault of heavy industry 1840-1980. The Western Harbour Tunnel proposes an 'immersed tube' construction which would dangerously disturb toxic sediment upon the sea bed between Birchgrove and Waverton, which is a very bad idea... especially if you're a fish, an angler, a harbour swimmer, a sailor or a rower.

Attachments

Bottleneck!

[20pp anti-WCX newspaper published August 2017]

Sensitive Receivers: Rejecting WestCONnex

[79pp e-catalogue for April 2017 Rozelle exhibition]

Air Quality

[2pp flyer for Public Meeting, Rozelle, August 2018]