

Submission
No 359

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX
PROJECT**

Name: Mr Colin Charlton

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Partially
Confidential

SUMMARY

I see three main problems with Westconnex:

1. There was no consideration for what happens to the traffic when it leaves the area covered by the project.
2. In deciding to build Westconnex, the option of rail and public transport were never seriously considered.
3. Acquisitions for Westconnex construction consisted of the purchase of private homes and businesses by the public authority, RMS, for Westconnex to be subsequently sold back to a private consortium. This is immoral, if not illegal.
4. The sale of Westconnex has been announced today I have enquired with Trevor Seymour Media NSW Treasurer about aspects of this and am awaiting his response

WESTCONNEX TRAFFIC IMPACT OUTSIDE FOOTPRINT

In attending numerous consultations on Westconnex, I was never given adequate answers about what would happen to traffic outside of the Westconnex footprint. The project never made any serious consideration of what would happen to traffic once it leaves the St Peters interchange. This was one of the major concerns of residents of the Inner West.

The St Peters interchange design stops at the corner of Campbell St and Unwins Bridge Rd. The traffic consequences on Edgeware Rd, on the other side of the railway line, was stated as not a problem of Westconnex'. Edgeware Rd is currently only one lane of traffic eachway. This road has traffic calming measures as well as two schools that will be badly disrupted by increased traffic flow from the interchange. The RMS and Westconnex have never given any plans to resolve this problem.

Euston Rd, that also flows off the interchange, is the responsibility of Westconnex to Maddox St. Beyond that McEvoy and Lachlan Streets are being widened by RMS, however this is not considered part of the Westconnex project and the cost is attributed to RMS

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Public transport infrastructure instead of Westconnex was raised by myself and many others at consultations it was not considered relevant.

Spending on rail would cost less, reduce congestion, have a reduced negative impact on communities and require less acquisitions. The footprint of Green Square station is a fraction of the St Peters interchange it has a positive impact on congestion in the vicinity. The lifting of the airport surcharge at Green Square and Mascot has increased patronage and should be extended to the airport stations.

ACQUISITIONS

My home in St Peters was compulsory acquired by RMS as part of the interchange. I believe I was bullied in this process, especially when the RMS threatened to decrease their offer by \$70,000 if I did not immediately agree with their offer on that day.

nn employee of RMS Was particularly aggressive, I beleive he no longer works for

RMS. The enquiry should consider if he was instructed to be aggressive by RMS.

RMS failed to stick to their deadlines of making an offer, as well as paying the agreed amount. This led to me not receiving the final payment until after 2/7/2016. This is due to the deadline date having never been discussed. This led to the payment not being received until the new financial year, an unexplained date which also coincidentally occurred 2 days after the Federal election.

RMS in the negotiations had a particularly aggressive and bullying approach when negotiating. The total opposite of the glossy RMS/ Westconnex brochures.

The enquiry should look at the variations in the amount paid to similar properties and how far the owners took the acquisition process.

The legal fees that were compensated to me were much less than the final legal cost I incurred. The inquiry should consider if this is common practice in the case of acquisitions. The person representing the legal firm that was supporting me was often overseas and difficult to contact. I was also not told he was not in Australia until I made persistent enquiries. I believe the inquiry should investigate how people faced with compulsory acquisitions select legal counsel for such a major disruption to their life. People faced with compulsory acquisition as I was do not have experience in engaging legal representation.

The replacement value for my home was less than that needed to acquire another property of similar value, within the area.

I was denied solatium as the RMS valuer assumed I was not living on the premises. This assumption based on the fact that there was minimal furniture on the premises, which was because I was in the process of moving out at the time.

Due to obvious problems with the acquisition process, Premier Baird offered an additional payment, which I applied for. This was denied as I had not received solatium in the original negotiations.

WESTCONNEX SALE

The sale of 51% of Westconnex has been announced today, 31st August, for \$9.26 billion. The claimed cost to the NSW government of Westconnex is \$16.8 billion (51% of \$16.8 billion is \$8.57 billion). Does this mean the NSW government made \$0.69 billion on the sale of 51%?

The SMH 31/8/18 <https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/transurban-wins-bid-for-majority-control-of-sydney-s-westconnex-20180831-p500ws.html> quotes the treasurer "Mr Perrottet said about \$5.3 billion of the sale price would be spent delivering the final third stage of WestConnex, a tunnel under Sydney's inner west linking the M4 and M5 motorways." Is this part of the \$16.8 billion or an additional cost?

If additional, this would bring the cost to \$16.8 billion + \$5.3 billion = \$22.1 billion. Fifty-one percent of \$22.1 billion is \$11.3 billion resulting in a loss on the 51% sale of \$1.68 billion. The cost of the inner west linking the M4 and M5 motorways could also be more than \$5.3 billion given the complexity of the Rozelle interchange. (under ground spaghetti junction attached) The cost of acquiring properties for Westconnex by RMS is also not included in the cost. (Page 139 Note 29 NSW report state finances attached)

The enquiry needs to look in detail at the contract for the sale of Westconnex and the total cost of the project to the NSW Government.

CONCLUSION

Acquisitions using the powers of the RMS are unfair the price is not determined by the owner of the property as would happen in a normal sale.

The cost of obtaining the properties to build Westconnex would have been a lot higher if Sydney Transport Partners had to purchase on the open market.

In many ways I am lucky to be no longer be living in St Peters with the noise, dust, odour and disruption of the Westconnex construction. Also fortunate to be a property owner in Sydney.

I am available to attend the enquiry if requested.