

Submission
No 428

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX
PROJECT**

Name: Mrs Sandra Greig

Date Received: 3 September 2018

Partially
Confidential

Submission to the Inquiry into the Impact of the WestConnex Project

(d) the compulsory acquisition of property for the project

Dear Committee Members,

We would appreciate the opportunity to give evidence to the Inquiry.

My husband and I inherited the property at **Campbell Rd, St Peters**, and lived there since 1985. The Greig family initially owned the property in which Raymond was born in 1946. The property was in immaculate condition and consisted of 5 bedrooms, large attic space, large 4 car garage, landscaped front and rear gardens, front and rear lane access, on 461m² of land.

The RMS approached us in November 2014 with the intention to Compulsory Acquire our home, and we engaged _____ from Slater and Gordon to represent us.

We attended a meeting with RMS and WestConnex representatives, and were told that we would receive market value for our property, and that we would be given 10% of the value to help us purchase another property after we accepted the offer.

In April 2015, the RMS made an offer of \$1.425m which we considered unreasonable and obviously rejected the offer.

During this time, we heard the property at **Campbell St, St Peters** had just been acquired by the RMS for \$2.4m. We knew the property was significantly inferior to our home. We asked _____ and _____ from Slater and Gordon about this acquisition and why it wasn't reflected in our valuation and the RMS offer, and we were advised that the RMS does not take Compulsory Acquisitions into consideration.

We were disappointed and upset with this response and believed the RMS should have taken this acquisition into consideration as our home was significantly superior. Slater and Gordon also gave my neighbours the same advice about RMS acquisitions, and we believe that Slater and Gordon and the RMS have deliberately reduced the value of our homes.

Even our valuation, which was arranged by Slater and Gordon, was considerably low. We believed it did not represent what the property was worth - it's true market value, and we questioned the low valuation as our home was unique and knew there weren't any other suitable comparable properties in the St Peters area. We were told it was too late to have the property re-evaluated.

The RMS then came back with a second offer of \$1.6m in June 2015. When we asked _____ why the RMS offer was so low, he advised that 'this was it' and 'that they would not go any higher', and led to believe the RMS would not make a better offer.

We were told we would have to go to the Valuer General and Land & Environment Court if we

didn't accept the offer, that it would likely take another year and be considerably expensive to resolve the matter and we might not get a better outcome.

Raymond wanted to appeal the offer, but we weren't in a position to fight this due to health issues. My blood pressure was sky-high and my doctor was concerned that I was close to having a stroke. We reluctantly accepted the offer as we couldn't see ourselves pursuing this matter any further, and we would've been forced into rental situation with no certainty or ability to purchase another home. We believe that Slater and Gordon were not acting in our best interests.

We had no choice but to move away from St Peters as we couldn't afford a similar property in the area with the amount offered by the RMS, and eventually purchased a home in Woy Woy. The RMS made it difficult to purchase another property as they refused to release any funds – even though they told us they would release 10% once the offer was accepted, and we had to arrange bridging finance. We also had to borrow from friends and family to cover our moving expenses at the time.

We were shocked and upset to later learn that a neighbor who owned a smaller property received more compensation than what we were offered. We couldn't understand how it was possible they could receive \$1.85m after our home was valued for much less. We wondered whether they were able to take advantage of the \$2.4m acquisition of Campbell St, St Peters - and why we weren't allowed. It wasn't fair.

We are still very upset about the way that the RMS has treated us. Our health has suffered as a result, and Raymond was forced to retire early due to the stress related to everything going on. We believe we were treated unfairly and cheated out of compensation for our home, and we want to be recompensed.

Thank you, we would appreciate the opportunity to give evidence to the Inquiry.

Raymond and Sandra Greig