

Submission
No 444

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX
PROJECT**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 31 August 2018

Partially
Confidential

Impact of the WestConnex project submission

This submission on the impact of the Westconnex project is to be considered as (j) any other related matter. This submission related to the financial and emotional affect the Westconnex has had on me personally.

Prior to the announcement of the Westconnex project in 2014 I owned my home at Brown St, St Peters, outright. I had a positively geared investment property at Barwon Park Rd, St Peters. By my estimate the investment property would have been paid off in 2019 and I would have been in a position to be a self-funded retiree living a very comfortable life on the rental income.

Today in August 2018 I have an abandoned house in Brown St that I can no longer live in due to constant noise and harassment by CPB Contractors Dragados Samsung Joint Venture (CDS-JV), who were engaged by the state government to demolish St Peters and build the Westconnex project.

I cannot sell my home at Brown St, St Peters, due to the project and the unrepaired damage caused by the Joint Venture. I am hoping to be able to sell this house when the project is finished (2020), however I will suffer a dramatic drop in property value as there will now be a six lane road within a couple of meters of my house with 24 hour noise estimate of 67db (according to the EIS). This noise is 2 ½ times the traffic noise I experienced before the project and is expected to cause sleep disruptions (again according to the EIS).

I was compelled to sell my investment property as I lost long term tenant, who moved in when I first purchased the property, due to the project. I could not find replacement tenants. During the sale of the property there were road closures on Campbell St and construction noise. The project definitely affected the sale price of the property.

I now have a one million dollar mortgage which requires the majority of my wages to service. I no longer have an investment property and see no opportunity to retire prior to the vestment of my superannuation. I can only hope that I can repay my mortgage and sell my previous home at Brown St prior to retirement.

By my calculations the project has cost me at least \$500,000 in lost wages (to deal with issues caused by the Joint Venture), out of pocket expenses, lost rental income, and property devaluation of my investment property.

I also estimate a loss of \$300,000 in property value of my previous home in Brown St, and \$1.5 million of rental income based on my current life expectancy.

One of the key performance indicators (KPIs) from Transport for NSW for the Eastern Suburbs Light Rail has been listed as increasing property values in the suburbs in the light rail corridor. Is the reduction of property values in St Peters one of the KPIs for the Westconnex project?

However any financial loss is nowhere near as high as the emotional duress I have suffered over the last few years. I was unable to be at home during construction hours due to the constant noise. I could not perform any work from home. I had to leave my house every Saturday as construction was scheduled for Saturdays. Often construction was scheduled for Sundays as well. Night work meant that I had to relocate, mainly at my expense, over 50 times before I had enough and decided it was better for my emotional wellbeing to walk away.

My correspondence to the State Government was ignored, or at best after an escalation responded with by undersecretary with a taunt "I believe the RMS is dealing with this". As far as I am concerned the issues I raised with the Premier (January 2017) and the Westconnex Minister (May 2017 and June 2017) are still outstanding. I have no faith that the current state government will address the issues I have raised with them regarding the effect of the project on my home.

The Joint Venture has performed the following violations on my home in Brown St;

- In December 2016 the joint venture illegally accessed my property and disconnected services including electricity, gas, and telephone connections. This was done under their understanding that my home was acquired by the project and scheduled to be demolished. Services were only reconnected thanks to the intervention of one of my neighbours who was home at the time.
- In January 2017 my property was fenced off for demolition proceedings. The fence was only removed due to the intervention of one of my neighbours who was home at the time. This was done under their understanding that my home was acquired by the project and scheduled to be demolished.
- In January 2017 the joint venture blocked the shared sewerage for Brown St. This blockage flooded by property with raw effluent. The joint venture denied responsibility until I engaged a plumber at my time and expense who categorically proved that the raw effluent in my property was due to the blockage of the shared sewer.
- In February 2017 demolition of Brown St commenced. During the demolition debris entered my property on multiple occasions. My fence was damaged on multiple occasions. My courtyard was damaged on multiple occasions. Extensive damage was caused to my garage. I am still waiting for this damage to be repaired. As per my last conversation with the joint venture (27 August 2018) they wish to delay any repairs until late 2020. The joint venture has also not granted access to the site for my insurance company to repair damage to my garage.
- In June 2017 the joint venture illegally accessed my property and made permanent modifications to my home in order to facilitate an electrical

feed from a temporary pole. This was despite assurances that the joint venture would not need to access my property to perform the required work.

- In August 2018 I was advised the Joint Venture needs to install a pole within my property boundary in order to provide electricity services. This was subsequently proved to be unfounded, however the joint venture does need to trench my property to provide electrical services post removal of above ground power. I have no faith this will be performed to a professional manner.

Although the Joint Venture has accepted responsibility and promised to remediate damaged, based on my experiences to date I do not expect this to occur. On the one occasion the Joint Venture attempted to repair my fence they caused more damage than was initially caused. In the words of manager within the Joint Venture the repairs were only suitable as a temporary, not permanent repair.

On too many occasions I have been threatened, abused, and intimidated by staff employed by the Joint Venture. This abuse occurred both on the streets near my home and also within my property. My partner has also been abused and harassed by employees of the Joint Venture. I was concerned that employees of the joint ventures would, physically assault me, or my partner, if I continued to raise objections to violations to both working constraints and my property.

I joked that I was living in “little Bagdad”, however it was no laughing matter. Over the course of the last three plus years since the announcement and the subsequent physical devastation I stopped entertaining friends at home and avoided by home as much as possible. I became withdrawn and suspicious of all strangers in the St Peters vicinity. I suffered great anxiety and loss of sleep. My physical and emotional health has suffered. I hope this is not permanent. Thankfully my employment hasn’t suffered, however I must admit that due to the project I was not always the most attentive employee. My friends have recently commented that my emotional health has improved dramatically since I moved away from what I previously considered my home for life.

I can only hope that once the project is complete that I can sell my previous home in Brown St and pay off my current mortgage. I have been luckier than most of the St Peters community that I have been in a situation where I could “just walk away” and do not have to endure the hardships caused by the project for the next two years.

I am happy provide additional details and context to the inquiry as requested.

Sincerely,