

Submission  
No 485

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX  
PROJECT**

**Name:** Ms Janet Dandy-Ward

**Date Received:** 31 August 2018

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Partially  
Confidential

31<sup>st</sup> August 2018

To Whom It May Concern,

Re: Parliamentary Inquiry into WestConnex

I am writing to provide a submission on the impacts and concerns with the WestConnex project. I have not addressed every item in the terms of reference.

**The adequacy of the business case for the WestConnex project, including the cost-benefits ratio**

From all the information I have read, I believe there is a financial risk to the NSW taxpayer. Is the the actual BCR for WestConnex is less than one? I think this should be fully investigated. What happens if the tolls on WestConnex do not reach the government's predictions, the government may have to subsidise the private sector to operate the toll road as it does with the Sydney Harbour Tunnel. This would potentially cost taxpayers billions of dollars over the life of the project.

**The cost of WestConnex project**

How can the NSW Government be spending so much, \$16.8bn on one road whilst neglecting other major projects in the state?

**Meeting the original goals of the project as articulated in 2012**

Westconnex was originally planned to link Western Sydney with Port Botany and the Airport-it does not do this? Why?

**Any other related matter - personal impacts on me and my family**

My husband and I emigrated to Australia in 2011 (leaving all our family back in the UK) and we moved into Roberts Street deciding that it could be a base whilst we think about what area we might want to move to. We fell in love with the street, our neighbours, our community, the community pre-school and our surrounding green spaces which we could easily and safely walk/cycle to (Sydney Park, Simpson Park) both are now impacted by Westconnex.

We decided that St Peters is where we wanted to live and have invested so much in the community – this is something that is worth fighting for; for my family, for our neighbours who have lost their homes due to forced acquisitions, for those older and vulnerable residents who are now feeling uncertain about their future in this and other suburbs.

I believe that this project will not meet its key objectives including reducing traffic congestion. This is a fundamental flaw. The social and environmental impacts briefly described in the EIS are unacceptable and far outweigh any benefits of the project.

In early 2014, I attended a community meeting in Marrickville. I remember being in shock about the size and scale of the proposed WestCONnex project but had very little detail about the project and how it would affect us directly.

Finding out more about the project was a very slow, painful process. I spent long evenings, after my full time day job, delving into old infrastructure projects (F6) and trying to work out what exactly the Westconnex Delivery Authority (WDA) were proposing. The broad maps and plans were unclear and gave no detail-it seemed for the very beginning this was a secretive and clandestine project.

In September 2014, we heard via our local Councillor that there were exploratory drill sites planned for the project, one of which was at the end of our road. I called WDA to find out more about these drill sites and what they actually meant. I had a very detailed conversation with one of the community liaison team, \_\_\_\_\_ and she asked me how I felt about a tunnel going under my home? I asked her "if there's a tunnel then there must be a ramp?" "Yes, that's right there will be a ramp somewhere in St Peters and a stack". So I asked what if individuals or the community object, she said "we can only work with people who will work with us"

The subsequent community consultation process is a complete insult. In fact, community sentiment regarding the project would be better gauged through an assessment of media articles and letters to the editor relating to Westconnex, the firm opposition of local councils including City of Sydney to the project, the number of protests and petitions and the record breaking the number of submissions opposing the EIS particularly the NewM5.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/westconnex-letters-anger-st-peters-residents-20150124-12xgkd.html>

I hope that as part of this process you hear in much more detail the points mentioned in the terms of reference. I know the information has been explored by the community, Councils, engineers and environmentalists. There has been extensive community concern relating to social and economic impacts of Westconnex which was never fully addressed in any of the EIS (planning approval process) and this was pointed out in 1000s of submissions which were blatantly ignored during the approval process.

**Sydney Motorway Corporation failure to respond to complaints-adequately and in a timely manner.**

Between July 2016 and August 2018 I wrote over 100 unique complaints, I cc'd Department of Planning and often the EPA. These were about the following:

- Unsafe removal of asbestos (WAG press release 14.8.15)
- Poor traffic control/management
- Behaviour of Westconnex construction workers
- Lack of consultation by Westconnex Delivery Authority/SMC staff

- Safety conditions of work sites
- School safety zoning (St Peters Public School)
- Odour/smell
- Dust
- Noise
- Safety of children at St Peters Public School and OOSH care

I received many auto-responses and only a handful of satisfactory responses to my complaints. Mostly my complaints were not responded to in good time and merely stated that the joint contractor (CDB) were acting within the conditions of the approval.

For me and my family the most individually impacting issue has been the unanswered questions about **children's safety at St Peters Public School**. I spent 3 months in late 2016 trying to establish whether St Peters Public School would be a safe option, given the construction site so close by and the imminent removal of people's homes from the area.

I emailed info@newM5 (23 Nov 16) and I did not receive a response from them until Jan 17 by which time my husband and I had decided to make an alternative plan for our son's education in year 3. This was at considerable financial and personal costs to us as a family. I am happy to provide copies of these emails, if required.

We temporarily moved from St Peters to Stanmore so that we could enroll our son in what we considered a safer environment. We rented a property in Stanmore at a cost of After 8 months (2017) we returned back to St Peters with a plan to permanently move into another suburb. Our son still attends Stanmore Public School so we are required to drive him or take public transport to school rather than walk to our local public school.

Prior to making this decision to relocate we approached head of NSW Public Schools (Marrickville area) and Ron Hoeing (State member for Heffron) to support our 'out of area' application for a school placement for our son as we were not at all happy or convinced that St Peters Public School was a safe environment for him. Our son has which means that he needs (like any child) an opportunity to use outside space at break times. During a meeting, Neil Levitt (Principle at SPPS) told us that the children would be safe because if the construction dust or air quality is poor then the teachers will "keep the children inside during recess and lunch breaks". This was not acceptable to our family so we had to relocate.

Since returning the issues have still been ongoing – noise, dust, un-notified night works and road closures, poor behavior by construction workers, I have to be away from the suburb to feel relaxed and that's a shame because it's where we live. It seems to take an almighty effort from the community when there are issues with the St Peters Interchange and construction sites at Campbell Road (St Peters) to make any change to the contractors behavior – where is the compliance to the planning conditions?

## **Community concerns about Air Quality**

Why have consultants, community liaison people and contractors for Sydney Motorway Company failed to acknowledge the long term impacts of Westconnex on air quality in Sydney?

<http://www.altmedia.net.au/nsw-air-quality-regulator-lacks-capacity-to-review-westconnex-pollution-risk/112681>

## **The value of trees**

I wanted to add something about the economic value of trees. We have already lost a significant number of trees during the construction of this project and I think we are underestimating the value of trees. I found two short articles and 1 short film about the dollar value of trees.

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/05/what-is-the-economic-value-of-your-citys-trees>

<https://architectureau.com/articles/trees-for-sale-keeping-cities-green/>

<http://education.abc.net.au/home#!/media/30762/value-of-trees>

I was having this discussion with my 10 year old son last week and he said:

“the trees are important for so many reasons, they keep us cool, they offer us shade, take away the horrible gasses, help with flood waters and they give shelter to much wildlife plus I like to climb them”

Thank you for considering the significant concerns I have raised around the WestConnex. As a family we would if we could afford to, move away from the construction zone altogether-away from the dust, the noise, the smell, the badly parked and often poorly behaved construction workers, away for the underground blasting at night and away from the ongoing worries about air quality and the ability to walk and cycle around this suburb that we love.

I recommend the whole project halted and reviewed.

Yours Sincerely,

Janet Dandy-Ward

St Peters

2044

