

Submission
No 505

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX
PROJECT**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 31 August 2018

Partially
Confidential

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

RE: Submission to the Inquiry into the impact of the WestConnex Project – the urgent need for an independent expert review

From:

Date: 31 August 2018

Dear WestConnex Project Inquiry Committee

I write to express my deep concerns on the WestConnex Project, how this has developed to date.

The WestConnex Project has been, and continues to be veiled in secrecy as to:

- Planning, the business case and financial blow out, 68% increase on the original estimate
- Burdens for present and future state budgets,
- Potential impacts for human health due to concentrated air pollution,
- Impacts on the environmental health of our iconic Sydney Harbour and biota
- Interference of urban renewal of the Bays Precinct and the public amenities that the State Government promised, resulting in undesirable social impacts.

There seems to be a total lack of vision to appropriately fund public transport to get cars off the road in a world where global warming due to greenhouse emissions is eroding and will continue to erode the living standards and health of generations to come in New South Wales.

While RMS states the fact that the environmental concerns for public health and health of the harbour will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement, this does not convey any confidence that there will be full disclosure and transparency of information as to the details underpinning public concerns.

It is urgent, before any State Government commitment or signoff for further developments of this project that the Legislative Council convenes an independent expert review to assess in a transparent and informative forum as to the financial accountability and environmental impacts of WestConnex in its current state and with particular concerns for the planned Western Harbour Tunnel.

With respect to the Western Harbour Tunnel, there are major concerns for public health as to the concentration of air pollution from toxic exhaust fumes from the

proposed unfiltered exhaust stacks in Rozelle and North Sydney, construction traffic exhaust and noise, the mega concrete plant proposed for White Bay, the increased traffic congestion on the Anzac Bridge, as well as potential to release volatile sulfide gas fumes and other toxics from disturbed harbour sediments.

There are also concerns with respect to remobilization of toxicants in industrially contaminated sediments. Over the past 30 years there has been major efforts to reverse the damage from the industrial legacy of Sydney Harbour to reduce toxic leachate entering the harbour from industrial sites and the effluent from broken Sydney Water infrastructure. These efforts have resulted in marine animals now thriving in parts of the harbour where they did not live or visit previously. Construction of the Western Harbour Tunnel at a location where the sediment is likely to be highly toxic to marine life due to the former AGL Gas Works at Waverton and the Shell Terminal at Greenwich is irresponsible. In addition to gas works and petroleum chemical contaminants, there will be a high load of tributyltin (TBT) in the sediments. TBT is one of the most toxic metals for marine life, and in minute quantities. As acid sulfate in sediments is an inherit trait of the estuaries in NSW, it is also likely that sulfides and acid will also leach from the disturbed sediment.

In the void of information from RMS as to the details of the nature and contaminant load in the sediments and human health risks including potential morbidity impacts of air pollution, the public is rightly concerned about these risk factors. It is imperative that there is no commitment to the West Harbour Tunnel before the required approvals have been secured. This is why an independent expert review is required.

The WestConnex phase 3B (Rozelle interchange, Iron Cove Link and Tunnel spur) has to be put on hold until an independent expert review of the combined WestConnex, Western Harbour Tunnel is undertaken including the impacts on human health, environment, community amenity and future state budgets.

I also urge the Committee to revisit the option for a bored tube tunnel. This would avoid disturbing toxic sediment, having to manage toxic dredge spoil and obviate the need for the massive concrete plant at White Bay.

Finally, in consideration of the climate change world we live in and concerns for future generations, public transport alternatives need to be invested in to improve transport for all in Sydney.

Yours sincerely