

Submission
No 522

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX
PROJECT**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I am heartened by the Legislative Council's inquiry into the WestConnex project. I hope there is sufficient time for constructive hearings, discussion and findings.

I am a resident of Sydney, based in Balmain, but travel widely throughout the city and suburbs. I hold great fears about both the short- and long-term impacts of the WestConnex project on our local communities.

I have seen the havoc wreaked on Haberfield and have had firsthand experience of the works impacting on the suburb of Kingsgrove. The immediate 24/7 noise during the road works and the loss of trees, parks and public and private amenity cannot be brushed aside as a necessary evil. The longer term 24/7 hum and jolt of cars and truck (brakes and gears in particular) and concomitant increased air pollution from vehicle exhaust fumes are nothing short of a disaster. To what end? Initially, I understand, the aim was to facilitate truck movements to Port Botany and provide better access to Sydney airport. Apparently these aims are no longer part of the plan. Instead trucks will travel through St Peters, more than seven kilometres from Port Botany. Now we aim for more and speedier car and truck movements? The promise of arrival at a destination 10 minutes sooner than may have been the case before?

What has struck me all along with this project is the haphazard nature (where to/what next/maybe here, maybe there?) and lack of anticipatory planning.

I was appalled when I attended a WestConnex 'community consultation' session in the Balmain Town Hall. The 'presentation' consisted of static, incomplete, hard to read maps. The staff were young temps who could add nothing to the information offered by the maps. The input by residents at the 'consultation' was by way of writing comments on yellow sticky notes! Disheartening and insulting – certainly not democratic!

It is obvious that the proposed spaghetti junction at Rozelle will in fact worsen current traffic congestion at the City West Link, Anzac Bridge and Iron Cove Bridge. But this does not seem to matter.

Finally, I am alarmed to read of the 'no competition' clauses that prevent the current and future NSW governments from building public transport alternatives that would compete with the tollways. This certainly is not in the interests of the citizens, but surely serves the commercial interests of the corporates involved. How can this be?

The transportation needs of the community are not the prime driver of this juggernaut.

Melbourne's East West Link and the Perth Freight Link were abandoned as a waste of public money. I shudder when I think of the damage already caused to individual home owners, communities and the environment by WestConnex. Another shudder when I envisage the fallout in the long term of this project.

It would be timely to halt the progress of the WestConnex juggernaut in its current form – make the best of what havoc has already been wreaked and instead focus on delivering to Sydney a friendly, reliable, safe and non-polluting public transport system.