

Submission
No 531

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX
PROJECT**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

28/08/2018

To: NSW Government Parliament **Via** submission website

Re NSW Parliamentary Inquiry - Impact of the WestConnex project

My main point to make to the NSW Parliament is to object further to the design, construction and operation of WestConnex. As Stage 1 and 2 are underway I concentrate on the Stage 3 M4-M5 Link as it actively supports unsustainable and unaffordable vehicular transport

The major reasons for my objections are outlined below.

1. Faulted NSW Business Case

There have been many studies and contributions by professionals on the business case for Westconnex. My own simple point is that long term investments are best assessed with long term potential costs. The financial modelling is not accurate with the assumptions made for the long term – 10 plus years.

Another element of business case fault on the project is highlighted by Infrastructure Australia in their Project Business Case Evaluation in April 2016:

A key part is:

“...the broader benefits of the WestConnex program begin to accrue only upon completion of Stage 3, which connects the extended M4 and M5. As a result, unless Stage 3 is delivered, the full benefits of the project will not be realised and the value for money of investments already made on Stages 1 and 2 will be diminished.”

So I understand that Stage 3 is required for a worthwhile business case. This indicates that stakeholder input is less valued.

I am also concerned that the business case for Westconnex essentially relies on the approval and implementation of all or a number of the developments including Sydney Gateway Beaches Link and the Western Harbour Tunnel (the inclusion of tunnels that would link Westconnex to the Western Harbour tunnel implies it will be built).

2. The lack of integration with transport and economic planning in and around Sydney.

The NSW Government “A Plan for Growing Sydney” (interim provided on the NSW Planning and Environment website) identifies **Greater Parramatta as a Priority Growth Area**. Provided information (for example in the community brochure) states:

“Our Interim Plan outlines how we’re planning for a connected, vibrant city with more jobs, homes, and essential services over the next 20 years. It provides a framework to guide future redevelopment and identifies the infrastructure needed for continued growth.”

However, the proposed M4-M5 Link is promoted as a link between Parramatta and Sydney CBD for employment and business. There is a focus on transport from Parramatta to the Sydney CBD and other locations.

This demonstrates a lack of integration of the intended NSW Government support of employment and business actually **in** Parramatta.

Also, promoting and providing for the use of private vehicles will decrease the demand for public transport. The RMS does not provide any adequate comparison with the benefits of public transport for worthwhile and holistic assessment.

3. Proposing an old-fashioned approach to transport and traffic management

Designing and developing road-based transport has been the major approach for 60 years. It is now widely recognised that this approach has not been effective. The proposal itself is an example: a road based transport system is not working optimally, so build a new or expand an existing one. This dated approach will worsen the transport and traffic management system now and into the future.

This needs to be avoided for the sustainability of people and the wider environment by reducing the use of fossil fuels, air pollution and associated impacts such as climate change. Our resources and budget should be spent on further developing extensive public transport.

4. Actually increasing the existing poor traffic performance

The proposed discharge of the traffic into the CBD occurs at the Anzac Bridge. This bridge is currently very congested throughout the day. Promotion and addition of even more traffic will slow travel time further over time.

5. Air pollution, noise and vibration during construction – specifically Rozelle Public School

Four to five years of construction works is proposed. Specifically in the Rozelle area, this includes constructing the tunnel entrance and exit on Victoria Road approximately 30m from the Rozelle Public School, continuing the tunnelling and all associated work including: demolition, storing and moving rock, haulage by trucks and the workforce travelling, parking and more.

Above-ground work is proposed to be undertaken 7am–6pm Mondays to Fridays and 8am-1pm on Saturdays. Tunnelling work (and activities to support tunnelling) will be 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Page 10- 108 in the Environmental Impact Statement stated that:

“One educational facility in this area would be subject to worst case exceedances of 11 to 20 dBA above NML during the higher noise generating activities. This receiver is Rozelle Public...”

This demonstrates how sensitive the School is to noise and other construction impacts. For children at Rozelle Public School this is potentially for the rest of their entire primary school education.

6. Safety and traffic management during construction and operation

Constructing and using the M4-M5 Link will endanger our community's safety and transport in many ways. These include:

- Increased safety risks for road users, including buses, pedestrians and cyclists during construction due to temporary road arrangements or the close proximity of construction activities to normal traffic
- Negative impacts on bus routes and cycle paths on Victoria Road.

7. Very little or no consideration given to comments on the Concept Design

Wishing to be involved in and respond to the proposed Stage 3 of Westconnex, I read and provided feedback on the Concept Design.

However, less than 2 weeks after the exhibition of the Concept Design closed the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was released. I cannot see how my (and others') comments could have possibly been considered and addressed in the proposal before the EIS was finalised. This is actually a disgrace on the promoted approach to consultation claimed by the Roads and Maritime Service on the proposal.