

Submission
No 532

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX
PROJECT**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Inquiry into the impact of the WestConnex Project Submission

30 August 2018

I welcome the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry.

I strongly object to the WestConnex Project. It is the wrong project for Sydney, it is destroying the inner city and setting in place a level of car dependency that is outdated and unsustainable.

The WestConnex Project objectives were set out in 2012. They explicitly place private profit over public good as private sector finance inevitably seeks to make a profit. It is unacceptable that the community be impacted so detrimentally for private profit.

The WestConnex project has morphed massively since 2012. Then, the rationale for the motorway was built around improved access to Port Botany and the airport, and the transformation and urban renewal of Parramatta Road. These were built into the objectives. While the motorway construction has moved forward with additional connections being added there is no connection to the Port and airport and no transformation of Parramatta Road. The benefits that were used to justify the Project in 2012 have disappeared.

No contemporary strategic land use or transport plan included WestConnex before the road project was announced. The same is now true of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link. Both these additions were announced and then included in the Greater Sydney Plan and Future Transport. There is no early strategic rationale for WestConnex and certainly none for the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link. These motorway connections appear to be designed to solve the traffic problems created by the M4-M5 link and add more toll revenue. To say, as Ministers have previously, that NSW is just catching up with road building plans from the 1960s is nonsense. Just because something seemed to be a good idea 50 years ago does not make it a good idea today – smoking is a good example.

The cost of the local road connections is not included in the cost of WestConnex, hiding the true cost to the public of the motorway. Examples include the Alexandria to Moore Park connection (Euston Road, McEvoy Street to Moore Park). These road widening projects have considerable impacts on local communities, increasing traffic intrusion, pollution and noise but are hidden through the Project's Environmental Impact Statements and planning approval processes meaning the full impacts of the motorway and its surface connections are not revealed and understood.

The NSW Government has not clearly articulated the toll impacts on the public and the 'sale' of existing and publicly owned road infrastructure. The M5 East will be included in the 'WestConnex package' and tolls will be introduced. The tolls on the Harbour Bridge, Harbour Tunnel and Eastern Distributor will be raised to the same levels as the WestConnex tolls and charged in both directions to evenly distribute traffic and level the playing field. The additional toll revenue accruing from Bridge and Harbour Tunnel will flow to WestConnex. The Government needs to be transparent with the community in terms of asset ownership and tolls across the road network.

The Crows Nest area offers a great environment. The amenity of the area is valued and it is truly walkable, in line with objectives set out in the Greater Sydney Plan and the District Plan, and Future Transport. The construction and operation of the Western Harbour Tunnel will be hugely detrimental to the area. There will be more traffic in close proximity to homes, shops, schools and parks. This will bring pollution, deterioration in air quality and reduced safety, particularly for people

walking and cycling. Homes, green space and amenity will be destroyed. The destruction of a community is not an acceptable price to pay for an outdated piece of infrastructure that will be doing little more than paying dividends to shareholders.