

**Submission
No 533**

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX PROJECT

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Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry of the Public Accounts Committee
into WestConnex

This submission relates to the Terms of Reference item (b) – the Governance of the WestConnex Project and Item (j) Any other related matters

Our community wants and needs world class public transport, not more polluting toll roads.

Global experience of major toll road construction has demonstrated conclusively that projects like WestConnex increase air pollution, encourage more car use, fleece road users with exorbitant tolls and eventually fill the increased road capacity they create.

WestConnex is shaping up as the most expensive road project in the world but it won't solve Sydney's congestion problem.

I strongly oppose the WestConnex project and the M4-M5 Stage 3 because:

- The **business case** does not properly consider alternatives such as public transport and demand management.
- The **budget** is now \$16.8 billion – 68% increase on the original estimate.
- A project of this scale, using taxpayer funds, should be subject to rigorous assessment but both the NSW Auditor-General and Infrastructure Australia have criticised the **governance** of this project.
- Hundreds of homes, businesses and parklands will be **compulsorily acquired**.
- It is diverting funding from **public transport** which is desperately needed across **Sydney**.
- WestConnex will turn Rozelle into a dumping ground for toxic exhaust fumes with three unfiltered **exhaust stacks** at the Rozelle Rail Yards and one at Victoria Road at Iron Cove Bridge just meters from home and a primary school.

The proposed **Rozelle Underground Interchange** is so large and so complex that Sydney Motor Corporation failed to find a construction company willing or able to construct it. Its impact on the local environment would be enormous. The design changes now being considered **must be subjected to a definitive and publicly exhibited design to allow for full and informative consultation with the community**.

The construction of the Interchange will lead to **substantial property damage due to subsidence** in heritage areas where houses were constructed using old foundation techniques.

The **health and the marine environment of the Sydney harbour will be seriously impacted** by the construction of the Western Harbour Tunnel. 400,000 cubic meters

of toxic sludge will be extracted from the harbour to be remediated on shore at White Bay, imposing unacceptable health risks to residents from air born toxic pollutants.

Pollution from the tunnels and the unfiltered stacks to be constructed in the Rozelle Rail Yards will increase PM10 and PM2.5 particles to dangerous levels. According to World Health Organisation these particles are capable of being ingested and can pass through the lung walls and into the blood stream and brain, leading to increases of death from strokes, heart attacks, cancer and respiratory diseases. The young and elderly are particularly vulnerable.

In view of the above concerns I urge the Government to look at alternatives to the M4-M5 link and the Rozelle Interchange. The lack of consultation and secrecy surrounding the project are not in keeping with good governance and the health risks it pose are unacceptable to the community.

Yours sincerely,

Sandra Langtree