

**Submission
No 3**

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE ROZELLE INTERCHANGE

Organisation: Inner West Council (Sydney Australia)

Date Received: 15 March 2024

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**Submission by
Inner West Council
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Inner West Council is strongly opposed to inner-city motorways and has continually proposed that enhanced public and active transport networks, combined with location-specific road network improvements, would better serve the community in terms of:

- environment and sustainability;
- preservation of historic areas;
- public health and well-being;
- overall community impacts;
- as well as offering a much better longer term transportation solution for the Sydney Region.

The residents and businesses of the Inner West, most particularly Rozelle and Balmain Peninsula, have suffered nearly a decade of noise, dust, vibration and construction traffic as WestConnex was being built, with the expectation that their amenity would be improved, public transport made more reliable and life would generally “return to normal” once Rozelle Interchange opened. The opening of Rozelle Interchange resulted in journey time increases in excess of 400%, with many residents taking over an hour to leave the Peninsula, local businesses being unable to be serviced and older members of the community being uncertain if emergency services would be able to respond if needed.

While the community has been told that conditions have improved, no historic data has been published to show this, and clearly, journey times and congestion levels have not returned to normal and there is doubt among the community that it ever will.

The current situation is intolerable and must be fixed both immediately and in the long term.

Recognising both the urgency of the matter and the purpose of this Inquiry, this submission focuses on the impact of Rozelle Interchange (otherwise known as WestConnex Stage 3B). It is worth noting though, that many of the key elements of the impact of Rozelle Interchange are intrinsically related to the overall WestConnex Project, most notably the increased traffic induced by the construction of the total WestConnex Motorway. While this project has now been completed, after promising significantly reduced congestion and travel times, the opposite has occurred and Council calls on the State Government to rectify this situation immediately, even if the solution requires a complete redesign of the project.

This submission provides a narrative of the historical short-comings of the WestConnex Motorway Project in the hope that the State Government can learn from these mistakes (for future infrastructure projects) and also act on some of the more specific recommendations to reduce the impacts of Rozelle Interchange on the travelling public.

In summary, this submission’s recommendations focus on:

- Increased emphasis on encouragement of public and active transport with a view to reducing private car dependency.
- A series of immediate actions to assist in reducing delays for residents off the Balmain Peninsula.
- A request to revise the approach to traffic and transport modelling from *Predict & Provide* to *Vision & Validate*, by establishing long-term desired futures rather than simply catering for existing trends.
- Greater transparency in the planning and design process, including examination of alternative processes and measures.
- The need to physically, visually and psychologically capture road capacity by opening public transport, active transport and public domain improvements simultaneously with the opening of major infrastructure.

- Improved overall communication and consultation on all major infrastructure projects, with public transparency about the reasoning behind key decisions.

Council and the community urgently seek immediate solutions to the current problems being experienced as a result of Rozelle Interchange and genuine long-term solutions to issues caused by the overall WestConnex project.

INTRODUCTION

Council appreciates the opportunity to provide a submission to the *Inquiry into the Impact of the Rozelle Interchange*. At the time of the WestConnex motorway being originally proposed, in 2012, the individual councils that now form the Inner West Council (Ashfield, Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils) all expressed opposition to the project and significant concern over its impacts, both on their local communities and the Sydney Region as a whole.

All of the former councils and the amalgamated Inner West Council have strongly opposed inner-city motorways and suggested that a significantly enhanced public transport, active transport and location-specific road network improvements would have better served the community in terms of:

- environment and sustainability;
- preservation of historic areas;
- public health and well-being;
- overall community impacts;
- as well as offering a much better longer term transportation solution for the Sydney Region.

The Inner West Community, most particularly those in Rozelle and Balmain, have been subjected to nearly a decade of construction activity with the understanding that, once Rozelle Interchange opened, conditions would return to normal or even better than previously encountered. This clearly was not the case and no historical journey time data has been made available to permit comparison between pre- and post-opening of the interchange.

Council and the community now urgently seek immediate solutions to the current problems being experienced, as a result of Rozelle Interchange, and genuine long-term solutions to issues caused by the overall WestConnex project.

For the purpose of this Inquiry, however, this submission from Inner West Council focuses on the impact of Rozelle Interchange (otherwise known as WestConnex Stage 3B). It is worth noting though that many of the key elements of the impact of Rozelle Interchange are intrinsically related to the overall WestConnex Project, most notably the increased traffic induced by the construction of the total WestConnex Motorway.

Several aspects of the issues associated with Rozelle Interchange can be attributed to this additional traffic, which would not be on the road network if major public transport measures were implemented rather than the construction of the motorway.

Whilst opposing the project, Council continues to work with State Agencies, contractors and other stakeholders to assist in mitigating problems arising and to achieve the best possible outcomes.

It is within this context that this submission is provided to the Inquiry.

For the Inquiry Panel's convenience Council has used the Inquiry's Terms of Reference points of consideration as its section headings.

Where general issues such as the need for a review of signage and road marking is mentioned, this submission may list some locations as examples but should not be considered a definitive review of locations.

BACKGROUND – COUNCIL’S STRATEGIC POSITION

Inner West Council has a long-standing position opposing inner-city motorways such as WestConnex, preferring public and active transport solutions to Sydney’s transport problems. Council is also concerned that one of the primary purposes of Rozelle Interchange was to provide access to the Western Harbour Tunnel (WHT) and that the exit delays and congestion are considered to be a localised inconvenience until the WHT opens in 2028.

As has been stated in all of Council’s prior WestConnex submissions, traffic reduction through new and improved public and active transport, combined with travel demand management is a far more effective means of addressing traffic congestion and improving transport efficiency than expanding road capacity through motorway construction. It is recognised throughout the world that motorway construction in large cities with growing populations is futile as it ultimately leads to increased congestion because of induced traffic.

In prioritising motor vehicles over other forms of transport, Rozelle Interchange and West Connex contravened a number of NSW Government and Council strategic plans including the Roads & Maritime Services (RMS) Corporate Plan 2018-2021 and Going Places, Council’s Integrated Transport Strategy which calls for reduced car dependency, improved transport integration and improved liveability.

While, in the case of Rozelle Interchange, the current traffic issues are primarily associated with the citybound morning peak there are varying levels of delay being experienced in both directions and during both peak periods. For the purpose of this Inquiry, Council’s submission will focus on the morning peak, however where relevant it will also discuss afternoon peak and counter flow issues.

SECTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:

THE PLANNING, DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROZELLE INTERCHANGE PROJECT AND ITS IMPACT ON TRAFFIC FLOW, INCLUDING THE PRIORITISATION OF TRAFFIC FROM TOLL ROADS INCLUDING WESTCONNEX OVER LOCAL TRAFFIC

In considering the planning and development of the Rozelle Interchange project it is essential to recognise that it is intrinsically linked to the development of the WestConnex Motorway. When the original Long Term Transport Master Plan Discussion Paper and draft Long Term Transport Master Plan was placed on exhibition (2012) they did not include the WestConnex Motorway. WestConnex was subsequently introduced into the final version of the Master Plan, in response to a submission received from Infrastructure NSW.

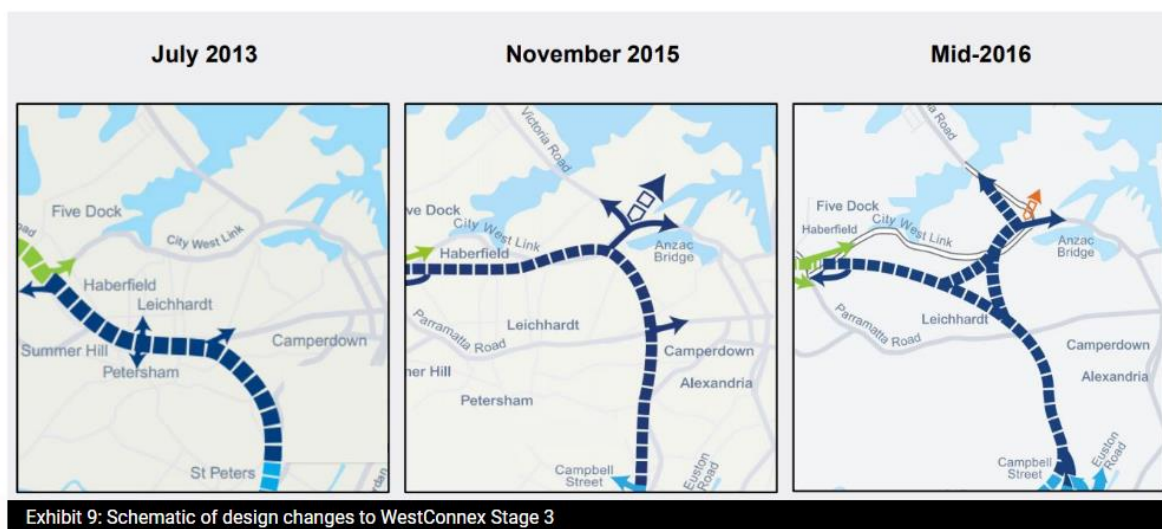
From this time onwards many Inner Sydney councils and communities opposed the proposal to build an inner-city motorway linking the M4 (Strathfield) to Anzac Bridge (CBD and North Sydney) and Sydney Airport. It is also important to note that in its original form WestConnex ran under and in close proximity to Parramatta Road and was purported to be to significantly reduced traffic on Parramatta Road and potentially Victoria Road as well. This opportunity was then the catalyst for strategic transport business cases to be prepared for both of these roads, however these have never been made public. Consequently, there is no ability to analyse what the true benefits of the project could ultimately have been.

These changes to alignment are demonstrated by the Audit Office of NSW report titled “West Connex: changes since 2014” and shows that initially (2013) WestConnex was to run in close proximity to Parramatta Road and then to head southward to connect to St Peters and Sydney Airport.

The progressive changes to the WestConnex alignment and configuration illustrated in the Figure 1 (below) from the Audit Office report shows the movement northward away from Parramatta Road, toward what would ultimately become the Western Harbour Tunnel (WHT) interface.

By November 2015 the alignment had been moved significantly north (running in proximity to Wattle Street and the City West link) with a link to a future Western Harbour Tunnel (WHT).

The Iron Cove Link was subsequently introduced in 2016 to relieve potential congestion on Victoria Road, particularly at its intersection with The Crescent and Anzac Bridge.



Source: Transport for NSW.

Figure 1: Audit Office of NSW “WestConnex: Changes since 2014” (June 2021)

Introduction of the Iron Cove Link, in combination with the northerly realignment of the main line tunnel meant that there was potential for reduced traffic on Victoria Road, which then opened up opportunities for active transport and public domain improvements in the corridor. Projections in the *West Connex M4-M5 Link, Rozelle Interchange Modification* indicated a potential reduction of up to 50% in traffic on Victoria Road (see Figure 2 below).

	No Build		Do Something				Do Something Plus					
	15 Hour		9 Hour		15 Hour		9 Hour		15 Hour		9 Hour	
	Light Volume	HGV	Light Volume	HGV	Light Volume	HGV	Light Volume	HGV	Light Volume	HGV	Light Volume	HGV
Victoria Rd - Southbound												
Btwn Park Ave & Iron Cove Link	41033	2051	6139	228	43322	2441	6481	271	43665	2807	6533	312
Btwn Iron Cove Link & Terry St	41033	2051	6139	228	17088	795	2717	105	16567	870	2634	115
Btwn Terry St & Wellington St	35556	2005	5320	223	12675	779	1896	87	12248	838	1833	93
Btwn Wellington St & Darling St	37549	2034	5618	226	15525	898	2323	100	15221	955	2277	106
Btwn Darling St & Evans St	29896	1434	4473	159	9222	519	1380	58	9007	483	1348	54
Btwn Evans St & Gordon St	30512	1465	4565	163	10931	554	1635	61	10644	532	1593	59
Btwn Gordon St & Robert St	34105	1547	4993	181	15848	661	2320	77	15558	620	2278	73
Btwn Robert St & City West Link	43774	1637	6891	157	27827	861	3855	92	27557	788	3818	85
Victoria Rd - Northbound												
Btwn City West Link & Lilyfield Rd	41790	1504	5789	161	24124	608	3835	80	24515	515	3897	68
Btwn Lilyfield Rd & Robert St	39169	1164	5427	125	20994	545	3305	52	21302	440	3354	42
Btwn Robert St & Gordon St	29603	1138	4987	114	10533	428	1775	43	10790	355	1818	35
Btwn Gordon St & Evans St	29580	1136	5041	120	10539	426	1796	45	10795	353	1840	37
Btwn Evans St & Darling St	30514	1143	4851	151	11872	453	1887	60	12150	390	1932	51
Btwn Darling St & Wellington St	31250	1391	5326	147	12554	553	2140	58	13133	537	2238	57
Btwn Wellington St & Moodie St	38761	1481	6162	195	18640	609	2963	80	19203	603	3053	79
Btwn Moodie St & Terry St	38422	1516	6549	160	18191	621	3101	65	18713	614	3190	65
Btwn Terry St & Iron Cove Link	36404	1484	6205	157	15730	562	2501	74	16163	558	2570	73
Btwn Iron Cove Link & Park Ave	36404	1484	6205	157	37960	2136	6470	226	42516	2251	7246	238

Figure 2: West Connex M4-M5 Link, Rozelle Interchange Modification Appendix C (August 2019)

Unfortunately, in the lead-up to the opening of Rozelle Interchange, TfNSW did not actively support Council's proposed improvements along Victoria Road (Rozelle Town Centre Masterplan). Council's proposals would have visually, physically and psychologically captured spare capacity resulting from traffic using the Iron Cove Link in preference to Victoria Road.

Intrinsic to Council's plans for Victoria Road was to make it obvious that no spare capacity would be available on the surface road network and in so doing (in combination with suitable media campaigns and messaging) this would discourage additional/induced private car travel in the corridor and so minimise likely induced demand.

While the adding of the Iron Cove Link and Rozelle Interchange, to the overall project, had the potential to significantly reduce traffic volumes on Victoria Road, as a toll-free bypass of Rozelle, it was an addition to an already extremely complex underground interchange.

The complexity of the interchange can be clearly seen in Figures 3 and 4 from a presentation by John Holland to the Project Controls Expo.

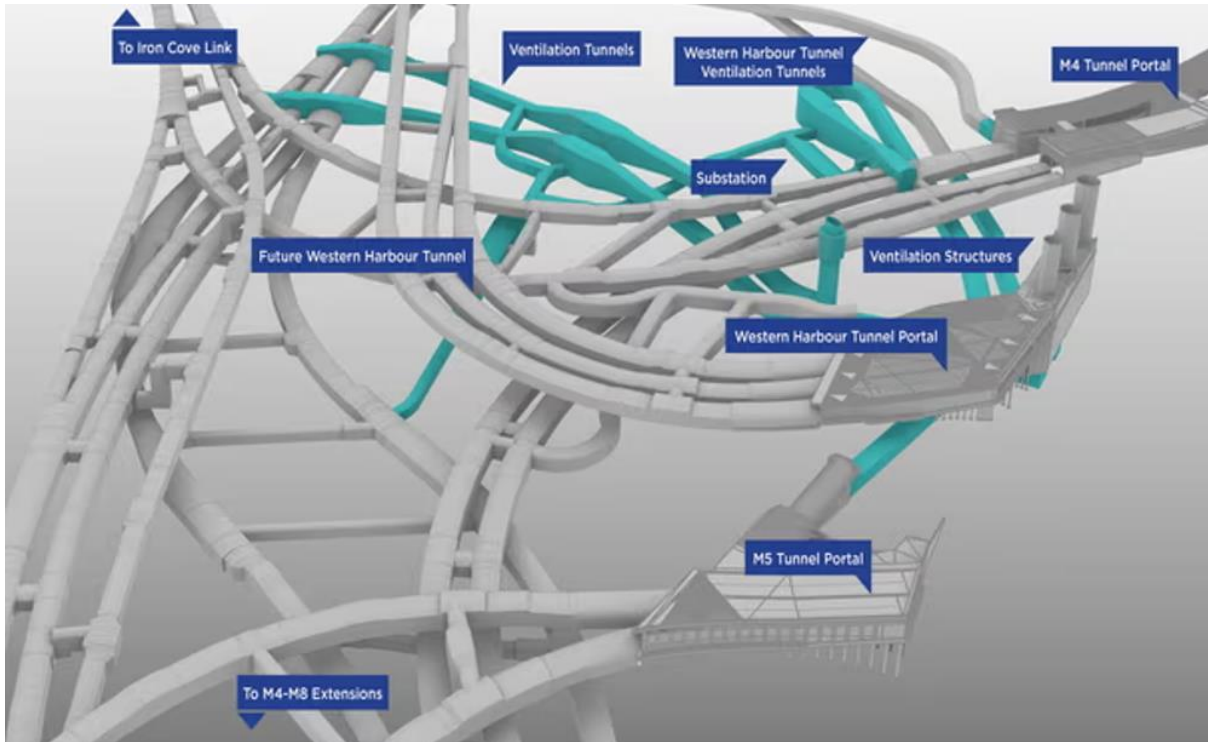


Figure 3: Rozelle Interchange Underground Schematic – John Holland (Project Control Expo)

Council’s concerns regarding the final configuration of Rozelle interchange are based on the enormous complexity of the layout, potential that the Iron Cove Link was “shoehorned in” as an afterthought and consequently priority may have been given to the M4-M5/8 Link ahead of the Iron Cove Link.

Alternatively, while the addition of the Iron Cove Link may not have been an afterthought, but rather a thorough redesign of the interchange, this final design does not appear to provide a fully integrated approach to the Iron Cove Link’s exit to Anzac Bridge.

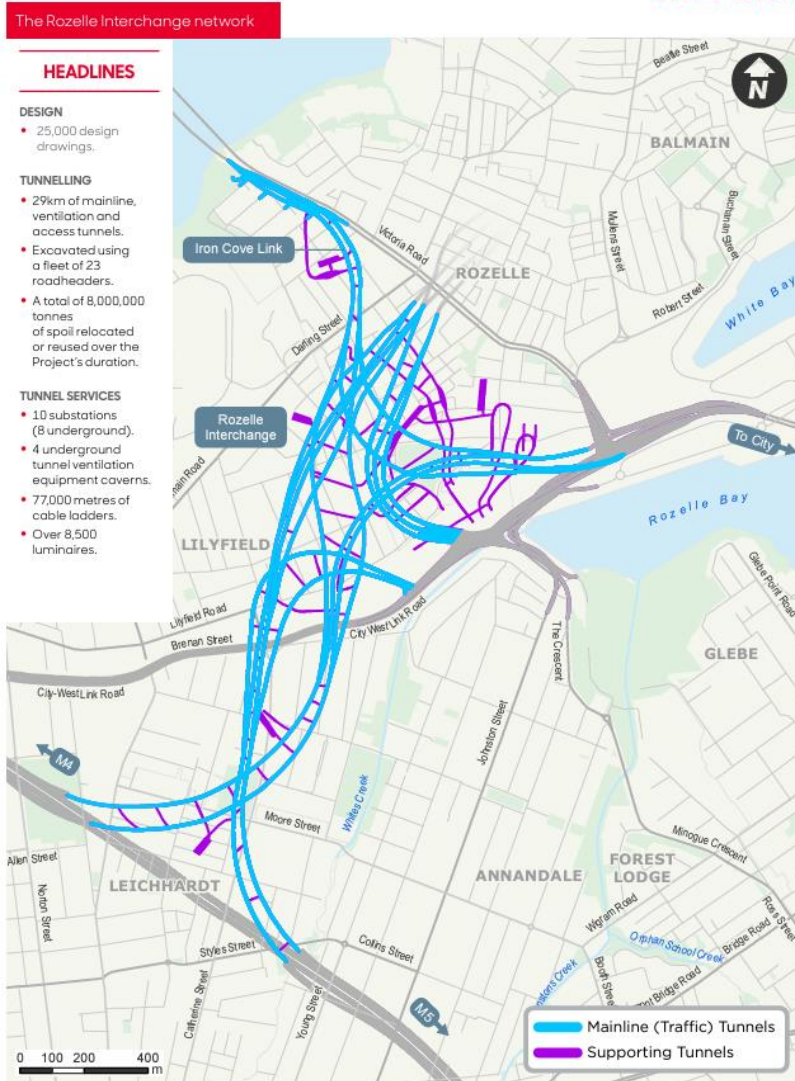


Figure 4: Rozelle Interchange Layout – John Holland

For citybound access to Anzac Bridge from Drummoyne/Rozelle, using Iron Cove Link and Victoria Road, there are a total of four merge points within less than 1500m of road length, with a total of eight approach lanes being reduced to four lanes on Anzac Bridge (see Figure 5).

These movements are further complicated by the various ramps and lane splits where vehicles trying to access the ramps and splits must cross multiple lanes. As an example, cars entering Anzac Bridge from Victoria Road have a maximum of 950m to cross 3 lanes in order to exit to Pyrmont, and at the signposted 60 km/hr this means they have less than 1 minute to negotiate the crossing movement (approx. 20 seconds per lane).



Figure 5: Merge points on Rozelle Interchange

Council is not aware of direct evidence which shows any specific prioritisation of lanes leading to the M4-M5/8 (mainline tunnel). It could reasonably be anticipated that more traffic would use that mainline tunnel than the Iron Cove Link, consequently, based on traffic volumes alone, it seems reasonable to provide priority to the link carrying more traffic (e.g., the link to the mainline tunnel).

Additionally, as no historical journey time data has been made available it is not possible to accurately determine to whether conditions are improving or not, as no comparison between pre- and post-opening of the interchange is possible.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

In making the following recommendations, it is important to note Council’s long-standing opposition to the overall WestConnex project and that this project is now completed. Consequently, as many of the current traffic issues are associated with designs within the fixed width of the tunnel or approach roads (including Anzac Bridge) the following recommendations focus largely on measures to ‘move forward’ and recognise but there are severe limitations to altering the current design, particularly within the completed tunnel.

- *With all future infrastructure planning the State Government should benchmark itself against World Best Practice International Cities, noting the current trend of not merely avoiding building inner city motorways but, in many cases, removing existing motorways to ensure high levels of mode shift towards active and public transport. In so doing it is essential that additional funding be put into such sustainable transport modes and that the approval process.*
- *The State Government should increase funding for active transport projects and streamline their approval process to ensure significant growth in the provision of major active transport facilities, most particularly separated cycleways.*

- *TfNSW should ensure that no future inner city motorways are constructed and refocus its attention on creating an international class city based around public transport. (In saying this it is noted that substantial spends are currently underway with various metro and light rail projects).*
- *To permit a clear understanding of trends in traffic conditions, TfNSW should immediately publish pre-, post- and current traffic volumes and journey time data for Rozelle Interchange, Anzac Bridge and the adjacent road network, including Victoria Road, City West Link, Darling Street, Lyons Road, Johnston Street, Catherine Street and The Crescent. This information should be readily available and easily understood by the community.*

ALL TRAFFIC MODELLING THAT WAS UNDERTAKEN, INCLUDING FOR WESTCONNEX, ALL SURROUNDING ARTERIAL ROADS AND ALL LOCAL ROADS

It is generally accepted that transport and traffic modelling is only as good as the assumptions and information it is based on. While Council is aware that extensive modelling was carried out and the results were published in numerous Environmental Impact Statements (EISs), Modifications (Mods), Construction Traffic Management Studies and traffic assessments, only limited information was publicly available to permit detailed analysis of how the modelling was carried out.

A critical concern for Council is that the traffic modelling for WestConnex and Rozelle interchange was a *Predict & Provide* approach rather than *Vision & Validate*. That is, that Council considers the modelling based on the assumption that a motorway was being built and that no realistic alternatives (such as location specific road network improvements, combined with enhanced public and active transport in combination with demand management measures) were realistically considered.

Given the premise that a motorway was being built, the modelling assessed what would be required to accommodate the traffic, including its induced demand. By building in a project's induced demand without application of any demand management mechanisms modelling has a tendency to become a series of self-reinforcing mechanisms where the building of the project creates additional traffic (induced demand) which must then be accommodated in the design, which in turn creates additional induced demand, and so an iterative process may eventuate. Should such a situation arise an arbitrary *line must be drawn*, and a decision made not to continue in the loop. Where and when this *line is drawn* relies on the expertise of the modellers and can vary significantly.

However, if the modelling includes demand management measures and other limiting parameters, another set of results may be produced. Due to the lack of transparency of the modelling Council is unable to provide definitive comment on the technical side of the modelling employed.

In assessing the suitability of the modelling carried out of WestConnex it is important to note that it was one of the most complex modelling exercises at the time and was specifically developed for the WestConnex Motorway Project using information from the TfNSW Strategic Travel Model. As stated in the *WestConnex Updated Strategic Business Case (Nov. 2015)* it was the State's "*first motorway project to factor induced demand into modelling*". This induced demand was predicted to be around 0.4% of the total number of cars on WestConnex.

However, the WestConnex Business Case Review (SGS Jan. 2016) found that:

Using '0.4 per cent of the total WRTM network' downplays the overall number of induced trips generated by WestConnex, as total network trips pertain to Sydney as a whole, rather than the study area specifically.

Examining Screenlines provided in Appendix A shows that induced trips make up nearly 80 per cent of traffic crossing Screenline 2 (morning peak), and 53 to 65 per cent of traffic crossing Screenlines 2 and 3 in terms of daily traffic volumes. 94 to 125 per cent of heavy vehicle traffic (daily) crossing Screenlines 2 and 3 are induced trips. These forecasts are concerning, as they suggest a very high level of new trips will be induced by WestConnex. Complicating this analysis is a lack of evidence of the source of the increased volumes and unclear presentation of charts.

Estimates for induced demand associated with the completion of WestConnex therefore range from 20,000 – 40,000 additional cars per day. Again, this is based on a *Predict & Provide* model which assumes that the motorway is the best solution.

Council, however, suggests that in contrast the *Predict & Provide* model used for Rozelle Interchange, a *Vision & Validate* model should have established the desired future (including sustainability targets, public domain improvements, active transport and public transport) and worked back from this to determine the mode shift required towards public and active transport in order to achieve this desired future.

The modelling could then have proposed a series of scenarios which would then require traffic flows along with mode shift incentives to achieve the best balance for the various movement modes to ensure essential travel was accommodated.

This could have been achieved through a complementary suite of public and active transport improvements, land use planning and demand management measures, targeting a mix of traffic flow, public transport reliability, active transport gains and community well-being through public domain and environmental improvements.

Additionally, because Council did not consider that the modelling satisfactorily addressed issues with potential “rat running” on adjacent local and regional streets, it commissioned its own Local Area Improvement Study (LAIS) to identify measures that were necessary to protect the local amenity of streets within the Inner West. This study identified approximately \$30m worth of works in local and regional streets and was subsequently forwarded to TfNSW for assistance in funding to ameliorate some of the potential impacts of WestConnex, however this funding was not forthcoming.

In relation to the WestConnex model being based on a *Predict & Provide* approach, the various EISs and Modifications state that the following strategic alternatives were considered:

- Alternative 1 – improvements to the existing arterial road network
- Alternative 2 – investment in alternative transport modes
- Alternative 3 – demand management (reducing the number of vehicle kilometres travelled on the network)
- Alternative 4 – the ‘do nothing’/‘do minimum’ case

No details have been provided to show any significant analysis of any of these alternatives, prior to the decision being reached that a motorway as the most beneficial long-term solution. This deficiency is particularly noted in relation to the public transport alternative, where the limited analysis states that:

Public transport is best suited to providing concentrated, high-volume flows of people to and from established centres. It is less suited to providing dispersed cross-city or local trips. In 2014, around 17.6 million trips were made each average weekday in Sydney, with around 75 per cent of these by road. Even with significant investment and high levels of patronage growth forecast for Sydney’s public transport network, about 72 per cent of around 27.5 million journeys in 2031 are expected to be made on the road network each weekday by private vehicles, equal to an additional 4.3 million new trips compared to 2014 (Infrastructure NSW 2014).

Key aspects of the above statement that indicate the modelling carried out was *Predict & Provide*, and consequently may not have been examining the best solution for Sydney as a whole and most particularly the Inner West include:

- By stating that public transport “*is best suited to high volume flows from established centres*”, the analysis implies that public transport it is suited to the peak period commute (which in the instance of Rozelle Interchange is when the major problems are occurring).
- The assumption that “*about 72 per cent of around 27.5 million journeys in 2031 are expected to be made on the road network each weekday by private vehicles*” indicates that the model is using current trends (2015) as its basis, rather than genuinely examining the potential impact of significant investments in public transport (noting that, even with its projected cost over-runs, Metro West is anticipated to cost less than WestConnex).

Even with the *Predict & Provide* approach used in the modelling its reliability must also be questioned given its projection, mentioned earlier, of around a 50% reduction in traffic on Victoria Road.

Additionally, based on the modelling used, the Stage 3 EIS indicated that network-wide:

- only minimal gains would be achieved in travel times;
- that new pinch-points would develop;
- Anzac Bridge would be at capacity.

In response to this modelling the, then, State Government proposed the Western Harbour Tunnel as its solution to the issues that would be created once Rozelle Interchange opened.

Council also noted that the Stage 3 EIS projected increased traffic on the adjacent street network but did not quantify this. In response to this Council submission on the State 3 EIS included reference to concern that considerable additional traffic would arrive at the already congested Anzac Bridge and spill onto the adjacent road network including The Crescent, Johnston Street and Ross Street. However, in the proponent’s *Response to Submissions/Preferred Infrastructure Report*, no detailed analysis was provided and no changes recommended.

Council, as noted earlier, commissioned Beca Consultants to carry out the Local Area Improvement Strategy, which recommended approximately \$30 million worth of traffic management actions for numerous streets adjacent to the various WestConnex portals, this was forwarded to TfNSW, however no commitment to mitigation works was forthcoming.

Additionally, based on the experience with the opening of the M4 East (WestConnex Stage 1), which resulted in significant delay and congestion on the City West Link near Norton Street, Council continued to express concern over likely impacts of the opening of the Rozelle Interchange, however Council is not aware of any additional modelling or recalibration being carried out to determine whether the previous projects were still relevant.

Should refinement of the model been carried out in response issues highlighted by the opening of the M4 East, beneficial modification to the design of the underground interchange may have resulted.

It is, however, also important to note that even if the modelling were efficient, accuracy and vision based, no modelling carried out prior to 2022 could have accurately projected travel behaviour in the post-COVID/COVID Normal period.

RECOMMENDATION:

TfNSW should de-emphasise its reliance on Predict & Provide traffic and transport modelling, replacing it with a Vision & Validate approach that decides on the desired future and then works back from this point to provide the initiatives to achieve it.

DESIGN DECISIONS THAT RESTRICTED OR COMPROMISED TRAFFIC FLOWS, INCLUDING ANY CHANGES FROM THE ORIGINAL PLANS OR MODELLING

Since the original WestConnex concept was exhibited there have been 10 formal modifications advertised. With the exception of *Modification 2*, they have generally been relatively minor.

While Modification 2 (The Crescent overpass and Active Transport Links) offered some active transport links these were not as significant as Council would have preferred, and as such are not considered to have been significant enough to encourage a mode shift which would have reduced traffic through Rozelle Interchange. The Crescent overpass, proposed in this modification, is considered to have been a significant alteration to the adjacent traffic network resulting an additional merge point and prohibited right turns from Johnston Street onto The Crescent.

Modification 2 also initiated the removal of the right turn from Johnston Street to The Crescent. While the traffic assessment included in the Modification identified several locations which would reach Level of Service F by 2023 (See Figure 6 6 below) no amelioration measures appear to have been proposed in response to these projections.

Table 6-13 Rozelle Interchange: key intersection performance (LoS) – Peak hour

Key intersections	2015 Base	2023 'with project' (EIS)	2023 'cumulative' (EIS)	2023 'with project' (Modification)	2023 'cumulative' (Modification)	2033 'with project' (EIS)	2033 'cumulative' (EIS)	2033 'with project' (Modification)	2033 'cumulative' (Modification)
AM peak hour									
Victoria Road/Wellington Street	D	C	C	C	C	D	C	C	C
Victoria Road/Darling Street	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Victoria Road/Robert Street	D	C	C	C	C	F	E	C	D
Victoria Road/The Crescent	B	C	C	B	B	D	D	C	C
The Crescent/James Craig Road	A	B	A	A	A	B	B	B	B
City West Link/The Crescent	B	C	C	B	B	D	C	C	C
The Crescent/Johnston Street	C	C	C	B	C	C	F	C	C
The Crescent/M4-M5 link ramps	-	B	B	A	B	B	B	B	B
PM peak hour									
Victoria Road/Wellington Street	B	B	B	B	B	C	C	B	B
Victoria Road/Darling Street	F	D	D	D	D	D	D	E	D
Victoria Road/Robert Street	F	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Victoria Road/The Crescent	F	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
The Crescent/James Craig Road	B	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
City West Link/The Crescent	D	B	C	B	B	C	C	B	B
The Crescent/Johnston Street	F	F	F	C	C	F	F	E	D
The Crescent/ M4-M5 link ramps	-	B	B	A	A	B	C	A	B

WestConnex M4-M5 Link
 NSW Roads and Maritime Services
 Rozelle Interchange – Modification: The Crescent overpass and active transport links
 Modification report

Figure 6 6: Modification 2 Traffic Assessment (2019)

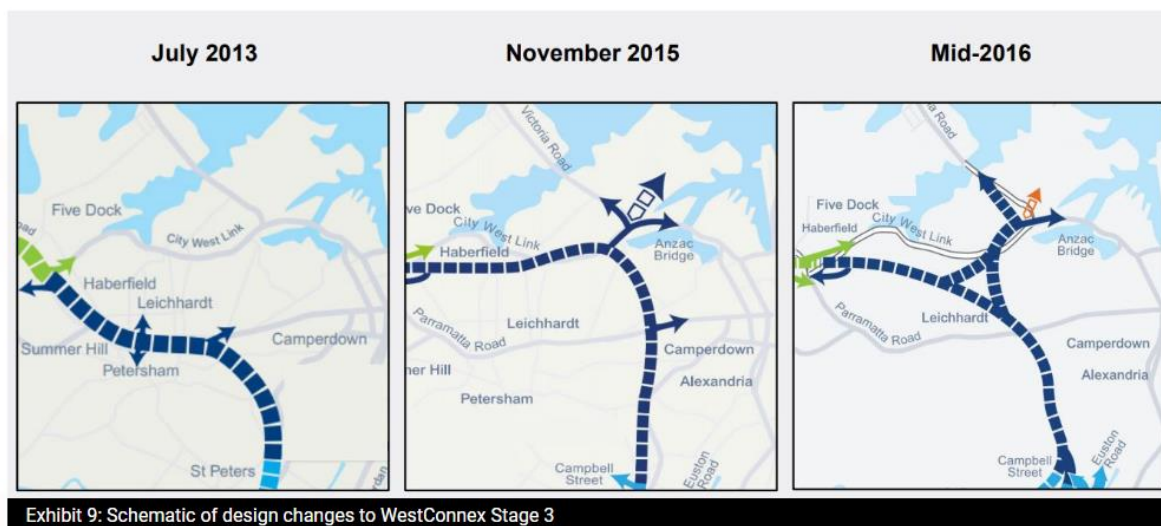
Similarly, as shown in Figure 7 7 below, WestConnex Stage 3 Road Network Performance Plan September 2023 (RNPP) noted declining performance for the Victoria Road/Darling Street intersection and yet no measures were proposed to counter this trend.

Table 3-3 intersection performance summary – alternative/updated layout

Intersection	Level of Service (LoS)					
	AM peak			PM peak		
	Stage 3 Post Opening Forecast		▲ ▼	Stage 3 Post Opening Forecast		▲ ▼
	Updated Modelling			Updated Modelling		
Scenario 1	Scenario 2		Scenario 1	Scenario 2		
Rozelle Interchange						
Victoria Road/Darling Street	C	D	▼	D	E	▼
Harris Street/Allen Street	C	C	=	C	B	▲
St Peters Interchange						
Campbell Road/Bourke Road	D	C	▲	E	D	▲
Ricketty Street/Kent Road	D	B	▲	D	B	▲
Gardeners Road/Bourke Road	C	C	=	D	C	▲

Figure 7 7: WestConnex Stage 3 Intersection performance summary

In addition to the various formal modifications, the ongoing change of alignment (see Figure 88 below) has meant that many of the benefits originally suggested by TfNSW (e.g., reduced traffic on Parramatta Road and Victoria Road, or reduced *rat running* on the surface road network) were not forthcoming.



Source: Transport for NSW.

Figure 88: Audit Office of NSW “WestConnex: Changes since 2014” (June 2021)

Ultimately it is considered that the original goals of WestConnex, and subsequently Rozelle Interchange, were diluted over time as the various modifications and realignments were introduced. These changes resulted in the project’s inability to reduce traffic on the surface road network, most particularly Victoria Road and

Parramatta Road. The ultimate result being significantly increased traffic volumes, related to the induced demand created by increasing road capacity without significant demand management tools being put in place.

Further, it is considered that the ongoing changes to the project have reduced potential key benefits that may have been able to be achieved.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *The State Government should examine measures to make the current EIS Modification process more transparent and readily understood by the community. The lodging of multiple modifications over a long period of time has the ability to reduce understanding of the total project and the bigger picture impacts these modifications may have. It also can reduce community input by creating information fatigue. In doing this however it is essential to recognise that the modification process has the ability to result in significant benefits when conducted correctly.*
- *The State Government should examine at what stage and after how many modifications a new EIS should be lodged rather than continuing with incremental changes.*
- *The overall EIS process should be simplified and versions produced that can be easily understood by community members, rather than the production of excessively large documents (some exceeding 10 volumes) where some elements (or issues) may not readily be perceived.*

THE PLANNING, DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROZELLE INTERCHANGE PROJECT AND ITS IMPACT ON THE EFFICIENT AND ON-TIME RUNNING OF BUSES, FERRIES AND ALL OTHER PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The introduction of the Iron Cove Link to the WestConnex project opened the opportunity for a new citybound bus lane to be installed on Victoria Road. This lane was introduced to provide more reliable journey times for buses, both local and express.

The concept of the offset bus lane has been included in several studies including TfNSW's recent On-Street Transit Study. Conceptually an off-set/displaced bus lane for express buses is generally regarded as aiding on-time running for express services.

The recent issues associated with on-time bus operation and reliability are not considered to be an issue specifically related to the new bus lane, rather they are primarily associated with the increased congestion experienced at Rozelle Interchange.

Recent data indicates that bus journey times are generally improving on Victoria Road, with average weekly bus journey times (as reported by TfNSW as "around the Rozelle Interchange") being in the order of 15-20 minutes.

Anecdotal advice from the community, however, is that peak period journey times are unreliable and continue to be longer than the journey times experienced before the opening of Rozelle Interchange.

In saying the above, it is again noted that TfNSW have not published historical data to permit an accurate analysis to be carried out of pre-and post- opening journey times.

Again, anecdotally (supported by observation) it appears that part of the delay initially experienced by buses was associated with inadequate training and understanding of bus drivers regarding how to use the offset bus lane in comparison to the kerbside lane with bus stops.

Use of the kerbside lane by local buses and the offset lane by express buses is a common practise in many cities. What appears to have happened in the days immediately after the opening of Rozelle Interchange is that some local buses were using the bus lane to avoid congestion but then needing to crossover to the kerbside lane to pick up passengers at the stops. They then needed merge back to the bus lane. This added to delays and confusion.

It was further exacerbated by frustrated car drivers illegally using the bus lane or being confused by the off-setting of the bus lane and/or needing to cross it to turn left into Robert Street.

Additionally, even with the bus lane on Victoria Road, buses were impacted by the congestion created where the bus lane merged with general traffic to get onto Anzac Bridge.

In relation to ferry services, some of the commuter demand experienced on the road network, could have been catered for by ferries, however the ferry network from Drummoyne and the Balmain Peninsula was reduced when Birkenhead and Balmain West ferry wharves were decommissioned over a decade ago.

Council is not formally aware of any measures to significantly increase public transport capacity from the Peninsula as part of any demand management approach that could have been applied to the opening of Rozelle interchange. Nor is there any apparent assessment of increasing public transport demand, or encouragement of mode shift towards public and active transport as a demand management tool to reduce congestion on the road network to coincide with opening of Rozelle interchange.

Council suggests that additional bus priority measures should be introduced to create more consistent journey times on Victoria Road and linked roads on the Balmain Peninsula. Council also suggests that the exiting ferry network should be augmented by;

- Expediting the recommissioning West Balmain ferry wharf and the creation of a new wharf in Annandale (as announced by Minister Haylen in February 2023)
- Increasing frequency and capacity of ferry services to the Balmain Peninsula;
- Ensuring comprehensive connectivity between the Peninsula's ferry and bus services.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The measures below are suggested to assist in encouraging a mode shift towards public transport and so reduce private car dependency.

- *Improved bus priority measures should be introduced on Victoria Road, Darling Street, Robert Street, and Mullens Street, Balmain, including B-signals and reconfigured lanes/stop lines.*
- *Consideration should be given to opportunities for some express buses to use alternative routes, however this should be initiated as part of additional bus servicing and not reduce the frequency and capacity of existing services for Balmain and Rozelle.*
- *Education and training of bus drivers should be improved regarding the effective use of the offset/displaced bus lanes. This should also be accompanied by education for the travelling public to avoid concern and confusion.*
- *Increased bus capacity should be provided for Balmain Peninsula and Victoria Road itself, including turn up and go services with a maximum 12-minute wait.*
- *Increased ferry capacity should be provided and expedited) including new services to Balmain West and the establishment of a White Bay Ferry Wharf.*

THE COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION PROCESSES UNDERTAKEN BY TRANSPORT FOR NSW AND OTHER RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS THROUGHOUT THE LIFESPAN OF THE ROZELLE INTERCHANGE PROJECT

The quality and quantity of the initial communication and consultation on the overall WestConnex project was variable and inconsistent.

Subsequent to the announcement of WestConnex being included in the NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan a series of workshops were held focusing on the benefits of WestConnex for improvements along Parramatta Road. These improvements included reference to significantly reduced traffic flows which would provide opportunities for:

- improved public and active transport links;
- widening of the footpath;
- enhanced public domain and local amenity;
- enhanced north-south permeability for all road users
- refocusing of Parramatta Road's priority within TfNSW's movement place framework so that the street was a vibrant street with frontage activation.

These workshops were very positive and provided an interactive consultation approach between TfNSW and the relevant councils, however as the alignment moved further northwards the focus of communication became more oriented towards information than consultation. Ultimately the Parramatta Road revitalization project was separated from the WestConnex project and a series of public meetings held to focus on aspects of WestConnex.

Many of the early WestConnex projects were community information sessions in the form of *town hall meetings* where residents were told what the project would be doing.

As the project progressed, a more genuine consultation process was introduced, where community opinion was sought, however (in the case of the Inner West Community). Only limited action was taken to address the community's concerns.

By the time Rozelle Interchange (Stage 3) community consultation was underway a much more consultative approach was introduced, with regular meetings being carried out with the council and community representatives. Regular updates were also publicly provided, construction hotlines established and clear points of contact for the project were made publicly available. Additionally, council was provided with clear channels of communication to contractors and TfNSW.

At the larger scale, much of the public consultation was carried out through the standard EIS and Modification exhibition process. Council continues to express concern that submissions provided during such exhibitions are often given cursory consideration. This is reflected in the small number of actions that directly arise out of submissions, as reflected in the *Response to Submissions* reports.

As such, Rozelle Interchange was no different to other major infrastructure projects, where public exhibition of an EIS or Modification is carried out, submissions are responded to by the proponent and, generally, only minor, low-cost alterations are proposed.

Concern is expressed that this process is compromised by having the proponent, rather than an independent assessor, respond to the submissions; noting that the proponent has a financial interest in the project and as such may have a conflict of interest.

RECOMMENDATION:

A formal stakeholder consultation process should be introduced for all major infrastructure projects - this process and protocols should be the subject of comprehensive public consultation prior to their establishment.

THE SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF THE ROZELLE INTERCHANGE PROJECT ON IMPACTED COMMUNITIES

As Rozelle Interchange has only been open since 26 November 2023, and much of the time since it opened was the Christmas holiday, Council does not have any definitive data in relation to social environmental and economic impacts of the interchange itself.

On a high level it can be said that:

Social impacts would include:

- Isolation of the community of Balmain and Rozelle created by the severely inhibited access to and from the peninsula because of extreme traffic congestion particularly during peak periods;
- Psychological impacts created by this isolation (referred to above) noting that work based, social, shopping and recreational travel were all inhibited by the congestion
- Psychological impacts particularly for older members of the community who were concerned that emergency services vehicles would not be able to access the Peninsula;
- Many members of the local community have been and are still suffering from *Construction Fatigue* resulting from some seven years of ongoing construction, including noise, vibration, dust and the ongoing need to express their concerns to the State Government and contractors;
- The psychological impact of the network delays on drivers, particularly delivery drivers and bus drivers who are operating on tight schedules, must also be considered.

There are also numerous social impacts on individuals and the community, that are difficult to quantify, induced by a community's ongoing struggle to achieve optimum outcomes from projects that have the potential to damage the local community in order to benefit communities remote from their area.

Environmental impacts would include:

- While no air quality readings are available at this time, it can be assumed that high levels of congestion created increased air pollution, both at the kerbside and through the unfiltered exhaust vents of the Interchange and Iron Cove Link;
- Additional traffic resulting from the opening of the interchange is likely to have increased particulate pollution, especially in the form of tyre and brake compounds.

Economic impacts would include:

- Travel time delays impacting timely work practices;
- Delays delivery vehicles servicing local retail, and couriers servicing commercial and residential properties;
- Bigger picture economic impacts of disruption to the overall bus network through delays experienced by Victoria Road buses. These delays have potential to impact on services as far away as the CBD and North Ryde and could have roll on impact throughout the day. While these delays clearly impact on the timely arrival of bus services, the bigger picture impact is related to the shift timing of drivers and the number of services each driver can provide on a delayed network in comparison to their schedule.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following recommendations made assist in fostering improved environmental conditions on Victoria Road and fostering both a sense of ownership and a sense of place for Rozelle which would then encourage re-activation and economic vitality for the centre.

Additionally, it should be noted that, virtually all of the other actions recommended in this submission, will contribute to bigger picture social environmental and economic improvements.

- *In order to visually, physically and psychologically capture capacity on Victoria Road, and so divert appropriate levels of traffic to the Iron Cove Link, the State Government should expedite approval and funding of Council's Victoria Road (Rozelle) Public Domain Plan.*
- *To assist Council in reclaiming Victoria Road for the community (as originally envisaged when the Iron Cove Link proposed significant traffic reductions on Victoria Road, Rozelle), TfNSW should investigate the declassification of the section of Victoria Road between the Iron Cove Link portal and Robert Street from its current status as a State Road, and that the corresponding renewal of this section of road be undertaken by the State Government prior to handover.*

THE IMPACT ON FOOT TRAFFIC AND ACTIVE TRANSPORT OPTIONS, INCLUDING DUE TO THE CLOSURE OF ROZELLE PARKLANDS

Council has consistently expressed its concern about the adverse impacts of Rozelle Interchange construction on active transport. Additionally, there have been connectivity issues associated with the final design of link to Rozelle Parkland the uncertainty created by its recent closures. However, Rozelle Parkland has resulted in two new and significant north-south connections across the City West Link and the east-west link through the Parkland to Anzac Bridge.

The Stage 3 EIS proposed improved active transport links through the former railyards and across established barriers (light rail line, canal and City West Link), connecting Annandale, Glebe, Lilyfield, Rozelle and the ANZAC Bridge via the Rozelle Railyard Parklands. Inner West Council supported these links identifying concerns about construction impacts with the removal of key active transport links soon after commencement of construction.

The removal of Beatrice Bush Bridge, Buruwan Park and the Victoria Road overbridge (connecting Lilyfield Rd and Anzac Bridge) soon after construction commenced had significantly impacted people walking and cycling, as they necessitated long non-intuitive, detours on poorly lit streets, often mixing with significant amounts of heavy vehicle traffic. This is considered to have demonstrated a misunderstanding of active transport needs and popularity in the area, including use commuters, recreators and small food businesses that rely on bike delivery services.

As these impacts became evident, the contractor responded by providing a temporary bridge connecting Victoria Road and the Anzac Bridge and this was welcomed by Council and the community.

Heavy vehicles, trenching and detours on Lilyfield Road throughout construction also impacted on people walking and cycling.

Additionally, the closure of the Victoria Road crossing at Terry Street disconnected a high-density residential area from access to buses and open space. While the closure of Buruwan Park removed another crucial active transport link and it remains closed today even though completed and opening briefly in 2023.

Modification 2 to the EIS proposed a vehicle flyover and widening of The Crescent to allow eastbound traffic to bypass the signalised intersection at The Crescent/City West Link. This reduced walking and cycling access by realigning the Green Link to one side of The Crescent requiring pedestrians and cyclists to cross 5 lanes of traffic when moving between Glebe, Lilyfield and Annandale. This modification clearly favoured motor vehicle access and demonstrated a clear misunderstanding of walking and cycling needs in the area.

Complicating this further was the proposed bridge from Rozelle Bay Light Rail Station to Rozelle Parklands which has been diminished from a “land bridge” to a wide shared path with perimeter planting.

Additionally, Condition E58 of the consent provided an opportunity to realise surface street improvements cited in Part 3.4 of the EIS (Project Benefits) for increased use by pedestrians and cyclists and public transport, however wording of the condition allowed Victoria Road to be excluded from consideration.

Opening of the new parklands in late 2023 was embraced by the community, only to be closed again due to discovery asbestos in the mulch. This impacted active transport connectivity as well as recreational use. At this time there is no information regarding when the Parkland will reopen, resulting in uncertainty in the community and disruption to active transport links.

Council has requested that issues noted in the design of the Parkland, raised with TfNSW in 2022, should be addressed before the park is re-opened for use, including:

- Poor interfacing with local streets, needing essential infrastructure such as kerb ramps and crossings;
- Replacement of stick bollards and u-shape bollards which currently restrict access by long and wide bikes such as child carriers and cargo bikes;
- Confusing line marking on paths whereby people walking and cycling swap sides in the park centre.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following recommendations are made to encourage greater use of active transport and so reduced private car dependency.

- *The re-opening of Rozelle Parkland, particularly for its active transport links, should be expedited (noting the need to ensure that it is safe and contaminant free).*
- *The reinstatement of the Glebe Island Bridge, as an active transport link, be expedited.*
- *A high-quality separated cycleway connecting Anzac Bridge with Iron Cove Bridge should be established.*
- *The Lilyfield Road Cycleway, which connects to Rozelle Parkland, and ultimately links The Bay Run with Anzac Bridge and the City, should be completed.*

THE CAUSE OF ASBESTOS DETECTED IN THE ROZELLE PARKLANDS AND THE ADEQUACY AND APPROPRIATENESS OF THE RESPONSES BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND CONTRACTORS TO REPORTS OF ASBESTOS IN AND NEAR THE PARKLANDS

Council and the Inner West Community both express concern regarding the presence of asbestos in mulch used in Rozelle Parklands.

It is understood that the New South Wales Environment Protection Authority (EPA), as the State’s Regulator of pollution, has been tasked to investigate the cause of the asbestos detected in the mulch at Rozelle Parklands. This investigation has been ongoing since mid-January 2024, however no clear answers have been provided at this stage to address the concerns of the local community and council. Additionally, no preliminary findings of the investigation have been released.

This has resulted in a lack of certainty as to the cause of the asbestos in the mulch in and around the Parklands and a consequent lack of confidence in the EPA by the Community, that it can robustly investigate this serious pollution incident.

One thing that is apparent, as the EPA investigation continues into March 2024, is the lack regulatory guidelines dealing with the commercial production of landscape mulch in New South Wales. It is considered

that, if there were appropriate and mandatory guidelines in place, such as chains of custody with product collection, the regulated recycling of mulch and methods of downstream supply, this would result in immediate answers as to the cause of asbestos being detected in the mulch. The lack of such regulated procedures has resulted in the inability of the EPA to provide definitive and immediate answers to Inner West community as to why there is asbestos in the Parklands.

Inner West Council (and its community) do not believe that the EPA has adequately and appropriately responded to this serious environmental pollution. This is evident in the Clean Up Notice to TfNSW (rather than the Joint Venture Partners) and subsequent variation to the Clean Up Notice allowing a further extension to comply with the statutory direction to remove the mulch from the Parklands. It is considered that the EPA has not implemented a vigorous approach to the problem by its failure in directing John Holland Pty Limited and CPB Contractors Pty Limited to actively deploy resources to the Parkland to undertake the clean-up action. The EPA should have at the very least, issued fines to or taken urgent legal action against TfNSW for its failure to comply with the Clean Up Notice. Or in the alternative, the EPA should have issued to the Joint Venture Partners a Clean-Up Notice directing the contractors to undertake clean-up action through an additional Clean-Up Notice. Simply extending the period of compliance to 28 March 2024 and or not directing John Holland and CPB Contractors to undertake clean-up action is an unsatisfactory outcome for the Inner West community.

Because the EPA has not proactively exercised its regulatory powers under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act, it has been left up to Inner West Council, as a regulatory authority, to signal its intention to issue regulatory enforcement to the Joint Venture Partners and Transport for NSW to undertake action to remediate the Rozelle Parklands. At the time of drafting this Submission, Council reserves its position on further enforcement action, as it waits to see whether current clean-up action directed by the EPA to TfNSW will occur in a robust manner.

For Inner West Council, the real issue in cleaning up the contaminated mulch at the Parklands is that the EPA has not been proactive in its regulatory function under the POEO Act. It has failed to ensure that TfNSW (along with the Joint Venture Partners) have effectively take on the responsibility to clean-up and put enough “boots on the ground” to ensure that the Parklands are cleaned up sooner rather than later.

It should be noted that the Joint Venture Partners have also failed, neglected and refused to discuss with Council how they will manage the pollution incident at the Parklands despite a number of attempts to contact John Holland and CPB Contractors. It is simply unknown what actions the companies have undertaken to date to remove the mulch or whether there is any co-ordinated action with TfNSW to remove the mulch from the Parklands.

This lack of urgency on the part of the TfNSW and lack of communication from the Joint Venture Partners does not provide Council nor the Inner West Community with any confidence that the removal of asbestos contaminated mulch and the replacement with clean mulch in the Parklands (and the eventual reopening to the community) is imminent. Rather the extension of time by the EPA, through a Variation of the Clean Up Notice, for the TfNSW to comply by 28 March 2024 (and with no direction to the Joint Venture Partners to engage in any clean-up action) is a serious concern of the community of Inner West.

The only conclusion that can be made by Inner West Council about the adequacy and appropriateness of actions by the EPA, TfNSW and its contractors is that the closure of the Parklands remains indefinite with no opening date for the public and that the Community continues to suffer (as it has done over a number of years) serious amenity impacts as a result of the construction of the Rozelle Interchange.

It is for the EPA and not Council to undertake a more rigorous enforcement action against TfNSW and its contractors to address this serious public health incident. The EPA must, for the future, develop and

implement a stringent regulatory regimen that ensures that processed mulch is fit for purpose and free of contamination.

RECOMMENDATION:

That EPA undertake more rigorous enforcement action against TfNSW and its contractors to address the serious public health incident. The EPA must, for the future, develop and implement a stringent regulatory regimen that ensures that processed mulch is fit for purpose and free of contamination with subsequent legal action for breaches.

SOLUTIONS TO EASE THE CONGESTION AND GRIDLOCK THAT THE OPENING OF THE ROZELLE INTERCHANGE HAS CREATED, INCLUDING THE IMPACT OF THE WESTERN HARBOUR TUNNEL AFTER OPENING

The primary issues causing the severe congestion and delays on Victoria Road, particularly during the morning peak, are related to the specific design of Rozelle Interchange and the merge lanes within and around it; there are four merge points, bringing eight lanes down to four lanes, within a distance of less than 1500 metres with the merge lengths being inadequate to cater for the demand.

As the intersection design has now been completed there is very little to be done that can improve its physical configuration, unless substantial funds would be provided to widen the footprint of the western approach to Anzac Bridge, however even then the fixed width of Anzac Bridge would be a key constraint.

In many ways the minor works that could be done, for example slight reconfiguration of merge lands within the existing carriage way, have now been done (in response to issues experienced stop at the opening of the interchange).

There may be some opportunities provided through:

- The re-phasing of traffic signals;
- Provision of additional bus priority measures;
- Improved active transport links including the reinstatement of Glebe Island Bridge as an active transport link;
- Physically and visually reducing the capacity of Victoria Road east of Iron Cove Bridge to preserve the amenity of Rozelle and encourage traffic to use Iron Cove Link rather than Victoria Road. This would also assist in revitalising rozelle while facilitating improved conditions and priority for buses from Darling Street. This could be complemented by the introduction of a 40km/hr speed limit, on Victoria Road, between Terry Street and Robert Street;
- On-going improvements to signage, road markings and messaging;
- Redesigning the intersections of Robert Street with Mullins Street and Victoria Road to ensure improved access and priority for buses;
- Increased frequency and capacity of bus and ferry services, with a view to increasing mode share toward public transport.

It is considered essential that residents of Balmain and Rozelle be provided with equitable access, however the assurance of reliable travel times for public transport, with particular attention in this instance being paid to the bus services (both local and express) should also be prioritised.

While Council does not have access to any recent origin destination information regarding use of Anzac Bridge and the Sydney Harbour Bridge, it is considered likely that the opening of the Western Harbour Tunnel will

attract many vehicles that would otherwise be using Anzac Bridge and so would reduce some of the traffic at the intersection of Victoria Road, Anzac Bridge and The Crescent.

Concern is however expressed that as the Bays Precinct develops, unless significant demand management mechanisms are employed additional traffic will be generated onto the adjacent road network.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

In making recommendations below it is noted that, as Rozelle Interchange has already opened and experienced severe congestion, many of the potential solutions should have been carried out prior to the opening and are not possible to introduce retrospectively. Consequently, several of this submission's recommendations are aimed at assisting with future projects as well as to author some remedial action for the existing problems.

- *TfNSW should examine additional opportunities for enhanced public transport throughout the affected area and as a sub-regional basis.*
- *TfNSW should examine opportunities to expedite completion of the Western Harbour Tunnel, and to ensure that its opening does not merely relocate existing, or create new, severe points of traffic congestion. In progressing the western harbour tunnel opportunities should also be examined to provide enhanced public transport either on Sydney Harbour and Anzac Bridges and/or in the Western Harbour Tunnel*

THE ADEQUACY OF TRANSPORT FOR NSW PLANNING, RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATION IN THE PERIOD LEADING TO AND DIRECTLY AFTER THE OPENING OF THE ROZELLE INTERCHANGE

Council had been informed that a comprehensive communication campaign would be launched several weeks prior to the opening of Rozelle interchange, however it appears that no significant messaging or communication was carried out until immediately prior to the opening of the interchange on 26 November 2023.

Council officers were not officially informed of the opening date in advance, simply that it would be “opening soon”, in early November 2023. Additionally, the Rozelle Interchange weekly update from Monday 20 November 2023 (published and circulated on from 15 November 2023), did not mention an opening date and, additionally, it indicated that night works would be occurring between Monday 20 November and Sunday 26 November 2023, with a specific item stating that local pedestrian and cycleway construction work would “start on Monday 20 November and will take about four weeks to be completed”.

Consequently, both Council and the Community were unaware of the opening until the Minister's press release *Rozelle Interchange opens to traffic* was published on Saturday 25 November 2023; announcing that the Rozelle Interchange would open by 6am the following morning.

As the release itself noted that “Around 100,000 vehicles a day are expected to use the Rozelle Interchange” it is considered that the communication campaign employed prior to the opening of the interchange was significantly less comprehensive than Council had been led to believe.

RECOMMENDATION:

The State Government should introduce extensive and comprehensive communications programs at least one month prior to opening any major infrastructure projects.

THE COST OF THE ROZELLE INTERCHANGE AND THE TOTAL COST OF WESTCONNEX

Council considers that it is not possible to accurately determine the true cost of the result interchange or of WestConnex itself. Even with the 2023 media reports that Rozelle interchange cost \$3.9 billion of the total \$16.8 billion WestConnex Program, highlights that it believes many of the alterations to essential services such as water and power may have been listed as “service upgrades” for the associated utility, and not listed as WestConnex line item.

At various times, during the consultation process, Council had asked for cost estimates and been informed that these were “commercial in confidence”. Consequently, Council is unsure that all true costs have been made public.

RECOMMENDATION:

The State Government should make the total cost of both the Rozelle Interchange and the overall WestConnex project (including all utilities works, planning design modification and construction) publicly available and subjected to the scrutiny of the State Treasury or an independent agency.

ANY OTHER RELATED MATTERS.

SIGNAGE, WAYFINDING AND DESIGN

As mentioned earlier in this submission council considered that advanced messaging and communication with the community and road users was deficient and that signage and wayfinding should have been improved prior to the opening of Rozelle Interchange

Shortcomings in the signage and wayfinding available at the time of opening of the Rozelle Interchange were a combination of both the signage itself and the design of the interchange.

In relation to the signage, the majority has been replaced or improved including signs which led to confusion over which routes were tolled. Some signage however continues to lead to confusion for drivers who have not negotiated the interchange previously. For example, the misalignment of lane signage on Anzac Bridge confuses some drivers by creating uncertainty as to which overhead arrows are associated with their lane (Figure 9 below).

This is further complicated by road marking which does not reflect the previously seen overhead signs and occasionally uses different names to the signage (Figure 9 which shows the road marking immediately after the overhead signs from Figure 8).



Figure 8 9: Misalignment of overhead arrows and lanes



Figure 9 10: Road marking does not use the same names as the previous overhead sign

COUNTER-INTUITIVE DESIGN OF RAMPS/ENTRY POINTS

Further complicating the messaging/signage is the counter intuitive layout of some of the entry points to Rozelle Interchange. Two examples of this include outbound from the City/Anzac Bridge:

- Entry to Iron Cove Link, from Anzac Bridge is on a driver's left, while Drummoyne and the iron Cove Link are to the driver's right;
- Entry to the M8 link is to the driver's right, while the M8 is to the driver's left.

UNFINISHED ROADWORKS

In addition to drivers needing to read confusing signage and take counterintuitive links the overall surrounding road environment is unfinished, with several areas that include temporary median strips, plastic New Jersey kerbs and blocked out signs (Figure 10), all of which adds to the confusion of navigating through an already complex road environment.

SPEED ENTERING SIDE STREETS

During construction of the online code link portal Victoria Road was reconfigured, resulting in reconstruction of its intersections with Callan and Toelle Streets. When council reviewed the designs for these intersections it raised concern regarding the turn radius applied for entry into the side streets council considered that the radius was unnecessarily large and so would encourage entries at higher speeds than are desirable, particularly given the shared path constructed along that side of Victoria Road (meaning that cyclists and pedestrians would be crossing at these intersections).

The persistence of TfNSW to provide these large turn radii appears to be based on the premise that vehicles turning in would need to do so at a relatively high speed, possibly because they would be in the bus lane, however council continues to express concern that these radii have resulted in increased potential for serious conflict.

NO SOFT OPENING

TfNSW had the opportunity to delay the opening of the interchange to the 2023 summer school holidays which would have meant significantly reduced traffic volumes. this would have provided the opportunity for a soft opening where lower smaller numbers of vehicles would have been encountered and analysis could have been carried out to determine where the issues were before subjecting the interchange to full peak volumes.



Figure 10 11: Unfinished roadworks

PUBLIC MEETING – 7 DECEMBER 2023

In response to the numerous problems caused by the opening of Rozelle Interchange, Inner West Council convened a public meeting on the 7th of December 2023 and has also maintained a Your Say Inner West (YSIW) website to permit the community to lodge their concerns and make suggestions.

Approximately 350 community members attended the public meeting and at the time of writing this submission, approximately 380 contributions had been made on the *Your Say Inner West* website

To assist the Inquiry Panel in gauging community feelings at the time, Council has included a summary of issues raised and suggestions made by community members at the 7 December 2023 meeting and a separate summary of comments made on Council's *Your Say Inner West* website (below).

Key community comments and suggestions provided at the public meeting held on Thursday 7 December 2023 included:

- The need to review current lane configurations, particularly noting the need to provide access out of Balmain Peninsula at Wellington, Darling, Evans and Robert Streets;
- The need to encourage more cars to use the Iron Cove Link tunnel rather than Victoria Road;
- Merge lengths should be increased wherever possible. They are too short and there are too many in a short distance;
- The off-set bus lane should be moved back to the kerbside lane;
- Signage and messaging should be simplified and improved, including advertising campaigns to discourage people from using Victoria Road;
- Tidal flow arrangements should be considered during peak periods;
- Better, more reliable active and public transport should be provided to encourage people to stop driving;
- Glebe Island Bridge should be reinstated to provide active transport access to Pyrmont and the City;

- The capacity and frequency of ferry services to the peninsula should be increased;
- Better bus priority measures should be provided on Victoria Road, Darling Street and Robert Street, to ensure the buses run on time
- Work on the approach roads, surrounding Rozelle Interchange, should be expedited so that they are completed immediately and create an environment of certainty that is not distracting to drivers;
- No significant public transport improvements were introduced to coincide with the opening and encourage mode shift away from cars;
- The off-set/displaced bus lane cause confusion for drivers, motorists and bus patrons
- Bus drivers should be educated on how to use the new bus lane in conjunction with kerbside bus stops;
- Messaging on the interchange and Iron Cove Link and how it would work did not occur in advance of the opening;
- Signage was inadequate including roadway marking which was covered in the dense traffic;
- Signage indicating that Iron Cove link was not tolled was confusing and the absence of a toll for the link was not “ marketed”.

Other suggestions and comments made via Council’s YSIW website include :

- Concern that works to improve conditions on Victoria Road have resulted in severe congestion within Annandale, particularly on Johnston Street and The Crescent;
- Opportunities should be examined to provide improved capacity on the fly over from The Crescent to the City West Link, should be examined;
- Lane configuration on the City West Link should be revised to better accommodate traffic turning from Johnston Street/The Crescent to the City West Link. This should particularly include opportunities to share the left turn lane into the tunnel portal (accessing the M8);
- Traffic signals to meter traffic from The Crescent to City West Link (citybound) should be installed;
- Tidal flow opportunities should be examined for The Crescent and Anzac Bridge;
- Congestion causing delays in access to and from Balmain Peninsula is causing stress, anxiety and disruption to work and other essential activities;
- Congestion and delays causing significant disruption to public transport buses means that the bus network is inefficient and unreliable;
- Congestion and delays have the potential to significantly impact on the efficient operation of emergency services;
- The traffic situation has increased frustration amongst drivers which resulted in safety hazards for pedestrians and cyclists, particularly noting drivers queuing across intersections (and crossings) and *running* red lights;
- There is a need to incentivise use of Iron Cove Link tunnel;
- Implement legible and safe separate bike lanes across (and along) Victoria Road and connecting areas;
- The usefulness of the off-set/displaced bus lane should be re-examined.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *An on-going review of signage, road marking and wayfinding should be conducted and publicly reviewed.*
- *All unfinished roadworks around Rozelle Interchange should be completed.*
- *Any incomplete road work on the surface adjacent to the Rozelle Interchange portals, that are associated with the Western Harbour Tunnel should be expedited.*

- *Turn radii on side streets, adjacent to the Iron Cove Link portal, should be reduced to ensure slower vehicle speeds and so minimising conflict with pedestrians and cyclists at these intersections.*
- *Consideration should be given to introducing a 'soft opening' approach for future major infrastructure projects. This approach would have all major infrastructure projects open during school holiday periods where lesser traffic volumes are experienced and so provide the opportunity for modifications to be carried out before peak travel demand is experienced.*
- *consideration should be given to varying school pick up times two separate these from the main AM travel peak in Sydney.*
- *TfNSW should introduce a, publicly available, on-going monitoring and review process, particularly looking at travel times on Victoria Road and bus journey times (on Victoria Road, City West Link and for Balmain Peninsula).*
- *In order to eliminate potential for conflict of interest and to ensure the most appropriate outcomes, the State Government should introduce a new assessment process for major infrastructure projects. Such a process should include assessment of submissions, on EISs or Modifications, in which the Department of Planning or an independent agency/company, responds rather than the proponent (who has already "locked into" the design being assessed).*
- *TfNSW should provide a formal apology to the travelling public and, most particularly to, the local community of the Balmain Peninsula and Rozelle*

CONCLUSION

Inner West Council is opposed to inner city motorways and as such has been opposed to the WestConnex and Rozelle Interchange because of their potential environmental, social and community well-being impacts.

Specifically in relation to the impacts of Rozelle Interchange, Council considers that:

- The original goals of WestConnex and subsequently Rozelle Interchange were diluted over time, as the various modifications and alignment were introduced, resulting in the project's inability to reduce traffic on the surface road network, most particularly Victoria Road and Parramatta Road. The ultimate result being significantly increased traffic volumes, related to the induced demand that is created by increasing road capacity without significant demand management tools being put in place.
- Many of Council and the community's concerns raised during the exhibition of the various EISs and Modifications were not given sufficient consideration as the design progressed.
- The overall design of the interchange is overly complex and difficult for drivers to understand. In particular:
 - there are too many merge points in too short a distance (4 merge points in less than 1500m), reducing 8 lanes to four;
 - The merge distance is provided at each point are inadequate.
- The traffic modelling was a *Predict & Provide* rather than *Vision & Validate* approach. This appears to be because the WestConnex project was driven by the assumption that a motorway was the best solution without having genuinely tested alternative transport scenarios.
- The advance communication and messaging, leading up to the opening of the interchange was completely inadequate;
- Spare capacity on Victoria Road was not "captured" in a manner which was obvious and well communicated;
- Signage and road marking at and around the interchange was inadequate;
- Information regarding Iron Cove Link being toll free was inadequate;
- There appears to have been insufficient training of bus drivers in relation to the operation of the displaced bus lane

- No significant public transport improvements were introduced prior to, or in coordination with, the opening of Rozelle interchange.

Council considers that, once the issues were identified, corresponding to the opening of Rozelle interchange, TfNSW reacted quickly, however the only measures immediately available were relatively minor adjustments which resulted in relatively minor improvements. The key issues experienced are associated with inadequacy of merge length, complexity of the interchange design, counter-intuitive design of entry points and lack of an advance public messaging/education campaign.

Council also expresses concern that Rozelle interchange has been designed in a manner which relies on the increased capacity provided by the Western Harbour Tunnel to relieve its congestion and further that it is generally considered acceptable, by TfNSW, that relief of the congestion associated with the interchange should be achieved through the diversion of traffic to other parts of the surface road network.

Council considers this to be totally unacceptable and requests that TfNSW act immediately to resolve the current issues being experienced, particularly in relation to increased travel times for the community of Rozelle and Balmain Peninsula, with particular emphasis on improved bus journey times and the release of demand from the Peninsula.

It is essential that analysis be carried out to find out where the traffic is now diverting to and what the implications of this diverted traffic are. These impacts should immediately be mitigated. Additionally, it is essential that longer term solutions be found to, at the very least, restore previous conditions to the transport network.

In relation to asbestos contamination of Rozelle Parklands Council considers that the State had inadequate quality control mechanisms in place, reacted too slowly and ineffectively, as well as be remiss in its transparency, accountability and public messaging.

The residents and businesses of the Inner West, most particularly Rozelle and Balmain Peninsula, have suffered nearly a decade of noise, dust, vibration and construction traffic as WestConnex was being built, with the expectation that their amenity would be improved, public transport made more reliable and life would generally “return to normal” once Rozelle Interchange opened. The opening of Rozelle Interchange resulted in journey time increases in excess of 400%, with many residents taking over an hour to leave the Peninsula, local businesses being unable to be serviced and older members of the community being uncertain if emergency services would be able to respond if needed.

Council and the community urgently seek immediate solutions to the current problems being experienced as a result of Rozelle Interchange and genuine long-term solutions to issues caused by the overall WestConnex project.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Council calls on the State Government to State Government to rectify the existing situation, caused by the opening of Rozelle interchange, immediately, even if the solution requires a complete redesign of the project.

The following is a summary of the recommendations included in the submission, in the order of the Inquiry’s Terms of Reference:

- *With all future infrastructure planning the State Government should benchmark itself against World Best Practice International Cities, noting the current trend of not merely avoiding building inner city motorways but, in many cases, removing existing motorways to ensure high levels of mode shift*

towards active and public transport. In so doing it is essential that additional funding be put into such sustainable transport modes and that the approval process.

- *The State Government should increase funding for active transport projects and streamline their approval process to ensure significant growth in the provision of major active transport facilities, most particularly separated cycleways.*
- *TfNSW should ensure that no future inner city motorways are constructed and refocus its attention on creating an international class city based around public transport. (In saying this it is noted that substantial spends are currently underway with various metro and light rail projects).*
- *To permit a clear understanding of trends in traffic conditions, TfNSW should immediately publish pre-, post and current traffic volumes and journey time data for Rozelle Interchange, Anzac Bridge and the adjacent road network, including Victoria Road, City West Link, Darling Street, Lyons Road, Johnston Street, Catherine Street and The Crescent. This information should be readily available and easily understand by the community.*
- *TfNSW should de-emphasise its reliance on Predict & Provide traffic and transport modelling, replacing it with a Vision & Validate approach that decides on the desired future and then works back from this point to provide the initiatives to achieve it.*
- *The State Government should examine measures to make the current EIS Modification process more transparent and readily understood by the community. The lodging of multiple modifications over a long period of time has the ability to reduce understanding of the total project and the bigger picture impacts these modifications may have. It also can reduce community input by creating information fatigue. In doing this however it is essential to recognise that the modification process has the ability to result in significant benefits when conducted correctly.*
- *The State Government should examine at what stage and after how many modifications a new EIS should be lodged rather than continuing with incremental changes.*
- *The overall EIS process should be simplified and versions produced that can be easily understood by community members, rather than the production of excessively large documents (some exceeding 10 volumes) where some elements (or issues) may not readily be perceived.*
- *Improved bus priority measures should be introduced on Victoria Road, Darling Street, Robert Street, and Mullens Street, Balmain, including B-signals and reconfigured lanes/stop lines.*
- *Consideration should be given to opportunities for some express buses to use alternative routes, however this should be initiated as part of additional bus servicing and not reduce the frequency and capacity of existing services for Balmain and Rozelle.*
- *Education and training of bus drivers should be improved regarding the effective use of the offset/displaced bus lanes. This should also be accompanied by education for the travelling public to avoid concern and confusion.*
- *Increased bus capacity should be provided for Balmain Peninsula and Victoria Road itself, including turn up and go services with a maximum 12-minute wait.*
- *Increased ferry capacity should be provided (and expedited) including new services to Balmain West and the establishment of a White Bay Ferry Wharf.*
- *A formal stakeholder consultation process should be introduced for all major infrastructure projects - this process and protocols should be the subject of comprehensive public consultation prior to their establishment.*
- *In order to visually, physically and psychologically capture capacity on Victoria Road, and so divert appropriate levels of traffic to the Iron Cove Link, the State Government should expedite approval and funding of Council's Victoria Road (Rozelle) Public Domain Plan.*
- *To assist Council in reclaiming Victoria Road for the community (as originally envisaged when the Iron Cove Link proposed significant traffic reductions on Victoria Road, Rozelle), TfNSW should investigate the declassification of the section of Victoria Road between the Iron Cove Link portal and Robert Street*

from its current status as a State Road, and that the corresponding renewal of this section of road be undertaken by the State Government prior to handover.

The following recommendations are made to encourage greater use of active transport and so reduced private car dependency.

- The re-opening of Rozelle Parkland, particularly for its active transport links, should be expedited (noting the need to ensure that it is safe and contaminant free).*
- The reinstatement of the Glebe Island Bridge, as an active transport link, be expedited.*
- A high-quality separated cycleway connecting Anzac Bridge with Iron Cove Bridge should be established.*
- The Lilyfield Road Cycleway, which connects to Rozelle Parkland, and ultimately links The Bay Run with Anzac Bridge and the City, should be completed.*
- That EPA undertake more rigorous enforcement action against TfNSW and its contractors to address the serious public health incident. The EPA must, for the future, develop and implement a stringent regulatory regimen that ensures that processed mulch is fit for purpose and free of contamination with subsequent legal action for breaches.*
- TfNSW should examine additional opportunities for enhanced public transport throughout the affected area and as a sub-regional basis.*
- TfNSW should examine opportunities to expedite completion of the Western Harbour Tunnel, and to ensure that its opening does not merely relocate existing, or create new, severe points of traffic congestion. In progressing the western harbour tunnel opportunities should also be examined to provide enhanced public transport either on Sydney Harbour and Anzac Bridges and/or in the Western Harbour Tunnel*
- The State Government should introduce extensive and comprehensive communications programs at least one month prior to opening any major infrastructure projects.*
- The State Government should make the total cost of both the Rozelle Interchange and the overall WestConnex project (including all utilities works, planning design modification and construction) publicly available and subjected to the scrutiny of the State Treasury or an independent agency.*
- An on-going review of signage, road marking and wayfinding should be conducted and publicly reviewed.*
- All unfinished roadworks around Rozelle Interchange should be completed.*
- Any incomplete road work on the surface adjacent to the Rozelle Interchange portals, that are associated with the Western Harbour Tunnel should be expedited.*
- Turn radii on side streets, adjacent to the iron Cove link portal, should be reduced to ensure slower vehicle speeds and so minimising conflict with pedestrians and cyclists at these intersections.*
- Consideration should be given to introducing a 'soft opening' approach for future major infrastructure projects. This approach would have all major infrastructure projects open during school holiday periods where lesser traffic volumes are experienced and so provide the opportunity for modifications to be carried out before peak travel demand is experienced.*
- consideration should be given to varying school pick up times two separate these from the main AM travel peak in Sydney.*
- TfNSW should introduce a, publicly available, on-going monitoring and review process, particularly looking at travel times on Victoria Road and bus journey times (on Victoria Road, City West Link and for Balmain Peninsula).*
- In order to eliminate potential for conflict of interest and to ensure the most appropriate outcomes, the State Government should introduce a new assessment process for major infrastructure projects. Such a process should include assessment of submissions, on EISs or Modifications, in which the*

Department of Planning or an independent agency/company, responds rather than the proponent (who has already “locked into” the design being assessed()).

- *TfNSW should provide a formal apology to the travelling public and, most particularly to, the local community of the Balmain Peninsula and Rozelle.*