

**Submission
No 266**

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX PROJECT

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Submission to Inquiry into the impact of the WestConnex Project

Whilst I am not directly affected by this project except as I travel sometimes across suburbs and sections of inner Sydney dissected and disrupted by construction zones I have been very disturbed at the way this project has been fast tracked and funded. I do not feel that carving up whole suburbs of Sydney for roads which become privately owned Tollways is sensible especially given the chronic neglect of adequately funded public transport.

If Government does facilitate the construction of major projects such as WestConnex it is imperative that:

1. there is fair treatment of those individuals and families directly affected by WestConnex. Many people's neighbourhoods, quality of life and health have been severely adversely impacted by this road project and its savage dissection of communities. From driving across affected parts of Sydney and reading media reports I am not convinced government has been responsible and genuine in meeting the concerns of families whose lives have been placed in turmoil both during and post the planning and construction of this Tollway.
2. projects such as WestConnex occur with the intent to ensure Sydney is underpinned by a comprehensive and integrated public transport and road network. It would seem WestConnex fails in this regard. It is unclear what road modelling occurred prior to the decision on the WestConnex route but the route and design seems contrary to the intent of the three cities approach of the Greater Sydney Commission for Sydney. Transport planning and urban growth planning should not run in parallel.

Finally I am deeply concerned regards the process to progress, build and sell this project. It is unclear where the genuine public interest, which government should be protecting, is properly represented in what is a complex arrangement lacking adequate transparency and accountability. I do not understand why governments are so ideologically driven to establish a government owned company to build infrastructure which is then only sold off to a private operator - in this case one with substantial ownership of other Tollways across Sydney. There must be better demonstration as to how this approach to infrastructure planning and construction is good use of taxpayer money and provides real and improved public benefit.

Yours sincerely Cathy Merchant