

**Submission
No 329**

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX PROJECT

Name: Ms Beverley Inshaw

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The Director c/- Legislative Council
Standing Committee on Public Accountability
Parliament House, Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Submission to the Inquiry into the Impact of WestConnex

Name: Beverley Inshaw

To the Director,

Please find my comments on the Inquiry into the impact of WestConnex based on the Terms of Reference as follows.

I agree to my name being published.

(a) The adequacy of the business case for the WestConnex project, including the cost-benefits ratio

WESTCONNEX has exceedingly high costs and are even worse than identified because they do not include the costs of compulsory property and land acquisitions

(b) The cost of WestConnex project, including the size and reasons for overruns

The costs of this project have been increasing over time and are therefore uncertain and very high

(c) The governance and structure of the WestConnex project including the relationship between Sydney Motorway Corporation, Roads and Maritime Services, the Treasury and its shareholding Ministers

The Sydney Motorway Corporation is a private company which operates outside the Roads and Maritime Services and there are no representatives from transport agencies on the Board of the organisation responsible for building WESTCONNEX. This is removing the authority of our public services and they are becoming nothing more than a rubber stamp for public projects which would never pass approval if they were subject to proper objective analysis and evaluated against well-developed alternatives.

(e) The recommendations of the Audit Office of New South Wales and the Australian National Audit Office in regards to WestConnex

I am in agreement with the highly critical statements that the project could not be recommended for federal funding and that the public's interest was not fully represented.

(f) The extent to which the project is meeting the original goals of the project as articulated in 2012

WESTCONNEX was started to provide a roadlink from Western Sydney to Port Botany and Mascot airport. Designs have now been changed. Extra lanes and tunnels added, major intersections moved and removed, tolls introduced, construction sites proposed and abandoned. The existing proposal does not include a link to Mascot or Port Botany. Instead it delivers vehicles seven kilometres away from Port Botany at St Peters. Because of these changes, the urban amenity and local traffic conditions will not be improved along Parramatta Road by WESTCONNEX, and any opportunities for urban renewal will not be improved. This removes and loses one of the key strategic reasons for this project. This alone should require the project to be stopped. Also the Business Case and all traffic modelling should be reviewed so that the people are given a true indication of the real impact of this changed project. This is not the only major alteration to the original scope and plans for WESTCONNEX, demonstrating clearly that this project lacks any proper planning process. This lack of proper planning and process has reached its highest point with the M4-M5 Link EIS which, by its own admission, is only an 'indicative' plan. The lack of plans in this EIS for what would be the most complex and expensive stage of WESTCONNEX is unbelievable.

(g) The relationship between WestConnex and other toll road projects including the Sydney Gateway, Western Harbour Tunnel, F6 and Beaches Link

A key justification of WESTCONNEX is access to Sydney Airport and the Port. However, the Sydney Gateway which would provide access to Sydney Airport is not going to be built at the same time as Stages 2 or 3. While supporting works to enable Sydney Gateway will be constructed, the Gateway itself will not be constructed as part of the WESTCONNEX and the costs associated with it are excluded. Therefore, it appears WESTCONNEX Business Case Review 21 is counter-intuitive that data around travel time to the airport is presented at all in the Strategic Business Case.

Patronage forecasts for WESTCONNEX require the Western Harbour Tunnel to feed traffic to Stage 3. The Western Harbour Tunnel has a preliminary cost of \$4.5 billion. The State Infrastructure Plan Update aims for the Western Harbour Tunnel to be delivered with, or immediately after, Stage 3 of WESTCONNEX. However a final business case is yet to be released. The full patronage potential of WESTCONNEX Stage 3 cannot be realised without the Western Harbour Tunnel.

Traffic across ANZAC Bridge is estimated to increase by 20,000 vehicles on an average weekday due to the opening of on-ramps at Rozelle, providing westbound access from ANZAC Bridge to WESTCONNEX. However, this will change once the Western Harbour Tunnel and Northern Beaches Link are in operation in the future.

(h) The circumstances by which WestConnex and the Sydney Gateway were declared to be separate projects in 2017

The City of Sydney's Submission on WESTCONNEX Stage 3 states that the M4-M5 Link is designed as one component of the WESTCONNEX program of works with the final phase being the Sydney Gateway. This Gateway is a connection between St Peters Interchange and the Sydney Airport and Port Botany precincts without which the supposed benefits of the M4-M5 Link cannot be realised. The current design does not serve this original purpose. Despite the Government's support for the Sydney

Gateway project, in reality it remains a project in name only. There is no information available about it, no preliminary design. This raises questions about whether the project is feasible, especially given the technical challenges involved at Sydney Airport. The completion of the M4-M5 Link without the Gateway means the primary goal of completing the link between Sydney's west and south-west with Sydney Airport and the Port Botany precinct will have failed.

(i) The cost of the project against its current valuation as determined through the sale of the Sydney Motorway Corporation and whether it represents a good investment for NSW taxpayers

WESTCONNEX does not represent a good investment for NSW taxpayers because the whole premise of the current proposal, that WESTCONNEX will reduce congestion and decrease travel times for people in Western Sydney, is completely false. This is obvious in the Governments own business case which shows that :-

(a) WESTCONNEX will save most users only 5 minutes

(b) catching public transport will be a faster way to move around in many cases

(c) WESTCONNEX will reach capacity in just 8 years

(j) Any other related matter

My most serious concerns are the increased amounts of air pollution and carbon emissions as a result of the development of Westconnex and the economic impact on residents of compulsory acquisition of private properties and small businesses

WESTCONNEX will be negative on the health and wellbeing of residents in the inner west by increasing toxic pollution levels near the proposed unfiltered ventilation stacks. These are located in residential areas, near schools and parks as well as bringing tens of thousands more cars onto roads in the inner west. Particulate Matter from vehicle exhausts negatively affects more people than any other pollutants. The most health-damaging particulates are those with a diameter of 10 microns or less which penetrate deeply into the lungs. These particulates will be concentrated in highly densely populated areas as a result of WESTCONNEX.