

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX
PROJECT**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 3 September 2018

Partially
Confidential

Submission to the Inquiry into the Impact of the WestConnex Project

d) the compulsory acquisition of property for the project

Dear Committee Members,

*I purchased my home at **Campbell Road, St Peters** at auction in mid 2001.*

I knew that the house was RTA affected but after contacting the RTA was advised that there were no plans for the road in the foreseeable future, and that it would be bought for market value at the time, if the house was compulsorily acquired.

This would have been an opportunity for the RTA to purchase the property given that they already owned three of the 5 houses in that block.

In 2014, I read an article in the media about WestConnex that our houses were going to be compulsorily acquired. I was very disturbed and upset to hear about this in this way, having had no official notification from the RMS.

Residents on the eastern side of the Princes Highway set up a community meeting with the RMS and WestConnex representatives in their newly established 'pop up shop' in St Peters in November 2014.

During that meeting the RMS acquisition team and Project Director of WC stage 2, Chris Swan, assured us that the process would be simple and straightforward, and that we would be appropriately compensated under the Just Terms Legislation. We were basically told that we would be looked after and guided through the acquisition process, which turned out to be a complete falsehood.

I met _____ from Slater and Gordon at a community meeting. He told us that he would help us through the acquisition process. In fact his words were "you won't even have to wrap a glass, and you will just turn the key in the door of your new home!!!"

After discussions with RMS/WC and S&G, I was confident going forward.

I then engaged Slater and Gordon to act on my behalf, and proceeded to obtain valuations for my property and prepare a submission to the RMS as required under the legislation.

My initial offer from the RMS was \$1,350,000, which I thought was really unreasonable!

At the time, I questioned this offer with Slater and Gordon and refused to accept it, as the valuation I had already had done was \$1.6m.

*A property on a similar sized block just down the road at **Campbell St** was acquired for **\$2.4m** by the RMS at the same time, and Vincent Butcher of Slater and Gordon advised that Compulsory Property Acquisitions could not be taken into consideration as comparable properties, which I thought was very unfair, given that we were supposed to be getting a market valuation based on other sales in the area!*

*A house identical to mine but in very poor condition on a similar sized block but right under the flight path, **Alfred St, St Peters** sold for **\$2.75m** in May 2015. When I asked Slater and Gordon why this one (which was the only other house on the market that was actually like mine) was not taken into consideration, they referred the Valuer to me. He said it was a development site and so couldn't be compared and it was on 2 blocks. In the public records for Sold houses, it is listed as one house.*

There was then a period of no correspondence from both RMS and Slater and Gordon.

They came back with an offer of \$1.525m and I questioned that, considering the properties that they had compared mine to were not remotely comparable. Slater and Gordon advised me to accept the offer, because that was "their best offer".

WELL!!! I was very angry and upset and did not accept their offer! Then they offered me their final offer \$1.530m, and Slater and Gordon pushed me to accept it! They told me not to proceed to the Valuer General as I may well end up with much less!

I was totally worn down by the process, suffering considerable anxiety, depression and ill health from the stress, and at the end of my tether!

I am also in remission from cancer and was worried that the stress would cause it to reoccur!

I accepted their offer as I had no battle left in me, my options were limited, and that my quality of life was now very poor!

I didn't consider that Slater and Gordon did a good job on my behalf! They were always making justifications for the decisions of the valuers and the RMS, and didn't seem to be working in my best interest.

It felt like it was me doing battle with them, not them on my side! There seemed to be a buddy relationship between them, the valuers and the RMS.

I was unable to purchase a comparable property in the St Peters area and had to move away from my friends and community.

During and after this whole process, my health has suffered considerably.

I have since been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, have had counseling and am now on medication.

I feel very isolated and miss my old home, local amenities, and my friends and community very much!

I'm happy to give evidence to the Inquiry.

Regards,