

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX
PROJECT**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 29 August 2018

Partially
Confidential

29 August 2018

To Whom It May Concern,

Re: Parliamentary Inquiry into WestConnex

I am writing to provide a submission on the impacts and concerns with the WestConnex project.

Lack of business case to demonstrate the cost benefit of the project to tax payers

From the beginning of this project there have been countless issues with the justification of the project. No complete business case was ever provided to the public to justify the cost benefit of this project which has climbed in cost since its inception 4 years ago. An audit of the project conducted by the Auditor General found that the project did not go through the established processes to assess its merits of nationally significant infrastructure investment and yet this project has proceeded despite evidence questioning its efficacy. Evidence to the contrary about the lack of effectiveness of tollways exists and has been ignored.

Lack of sustainability

The WestConnex project encourages fossil fuel use and emissions and induces traffic rather than providing a more environmentally sustainable solution to Sydney's transport and traffic issues. Other alternatives exist including more cost-effective public transport options which have been ignored.

Social and community impacts

As a resident of St Peters, I have witnessed the destruction of local residential properties which were homes to many important community friends. These residents were not provided with just compensation for their homes and were not able to remain within the local area as a result. Those who had been renting were also forced out of the St Peters area due to increasing rents. This has meant that children needed to leave our local public school, fracturing the local community and having significant impacts on the children of this area who lost life-long friends. The local public school and preschool who lost enrolments and therefore funding. Families continue to be avoiding enrolling their children in the local school and preschool due to concerns around access and safety. My own children lost the opportunity to grow up alongside friends they had known since birth and the families who were forced to move lost any choice and control over their situation.

Safety and Quality of Life Issues related to construction

Originally the community and school were assured that WestConnex workers would always park within the construction sites, instead workers are parking illegally in residential streets, too close to intersections, and too far from kerbs and occupying local carparks needed for local residents. These workers are also treating the community with disrespect by discarding rubbish in the back streets. The noise from the construction has been frequent and often sufficient warning has not been provided to residents. Provision of alternative accommodation has been inconsistent and lacked transparency with some residents being able to access this while others are not offered this alternative. For 3 months during construction, an unbearable sulphur odour was emitted across St Peters as a result of work at the old St Peters landfill site. This issue was not managed effectively and had significant impacts on quality of life for local residents for a prolonged period of time. Access to and from homes and local amenities such as schools, shopping centres and community activities has been difficult, unreliable and continually changing. Communication about changes to routes has been provided in an untimely and unclear manner. Footpaths and roads have also been inaccessible.

Health concerns and lack of transparency around air quality data

Prior to and during construction, air quality monitoring stations were established including at St Peters Public School in the furthest location on the school grounds from the construction in a location where students do not go regularly. The data from these monitoring stations was promised to the school community and has not been provided. It was not until an investigative journalist actively sought this air quality information that this was made public. The data showed that there were dangerously elevated levels of air pollution during the construction phase and the school and parent community had not been made aware of this. There are significant long term concerns about the impact of two unfiltered emission stacks being located within hundreds of metres of the public school and preschool.

Road safety Issues

Despite numerous representations to Roads and Maritime and Council by residents, the Department of Education and Inner West Council, no 40 kilometre school zone, nor over-rude crossing have been designated on Campbell St, St Peters which is a known danger point where there have been many pedestrian and cycling accidents. Illegal and dangerous parking by WestConnex workers is also dangerous to primary school aged children and ageing residents as it impacts on visibility for pedestrians crossing the roads.

Thank you for considering the significant concerns I have raised around the WestConnex project and ensuring that NSW Parliament address these issues.

Yours Sincerely,