

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTCONNEX
PROJECT**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 31 August 2018

Partially
Confidential

Submission to NSW Legislative Council Inquiry into WestConnex

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

inline with the terms of reference I would like the committee to investigate the possible inflation of benefits and how any history similar inflation was considered in the process, alongside similar issues of underestimation of costs.

No matter the competency of a business case's cost-benefit justification I believe the real question here is whether the return on investment was higher than other comparable actions that could ease transport issues.

Reducing the number of vehicles on the roads will have a far greater impact: adding these few roads could never compete with multiplying the capacity of all existing roads by trading some cars for public transport. There are significant non-tangible benefits offered by public transport improvements such as health benefit of people walking, increased liveability, attraction of major industry (consider Google abandoning White Bay), and equitable transport for an ageing population who will be unable to retain driving licenses.

Whereas the non-tangibles for Westconnex are largely negative: loss of greenspace, impacts on community of forced acquisition, reduced service to the areas from acquisition of businesses, interruption of peaceful residence during construction, health impacts from concentration of exhaust fumes at unfiltered ventilation stacks, increased stress on construction trade at a time when housing prices are still beyond reach of around half the population.

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

I am sure the committee will compare figures quoted before construction, costs to date, and current projected costs, I believe that as this is public money the spending of it should be transparent and obvious to all. To I also refer the question of why the project was ever undertaken.

- (c) consideration of 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

I would ask that the committee establish what proportion of political donations, and or loans come from infrastructure construction companies that will benefit from road building.

I want to know that those who were making decisions on where public money is spent were not under direct influence or having their judgement coloured by their party or personal future financial position.

- (d) the compulsory acquisition of property for the project

I wish to have the committee represent my personal interest in the compulsory acquisitions of homes, and businesses, and public greenspace such as Burwan Park.

This seems to be callous, poorly thought out, and very expensive. The loss of industrial spaces such as Swadlings in Rozelle is bad for all in the inner-city because there is little prospect to change zoning from residential to light industrial. Hence these businesses will never be replaced and there will be unfilled needs, or ironically greater reliance on road transport within the inner city.

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

I request the committee examine why WestConnex has proceeded immediately without further development of a business case in the light of recommendations to the contrary by these two audit offices. Where a project is progressed against prudential advice this leads to serious doubt over any corruption in the process.

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

My understanding of the origin of this project was to ease the route of heavy vehicles through to Port Botany. I want the committee to represent my incredulity at the scale this project can reach without meeting the aims. Further I wish the committee to investigate the situation that has been created where the unfulfilled goals leave the door open for a nother infrastructure program to be proposed in the future using those same goals as a stalking horse to leverage more public spending on roads.

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

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

The apparent desire to separate these is concerning. Whether they are separate or not is of less interest than the motives behind the political manoeuvring this separation represents.

- (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

This raises a question over whether pubic money has been transferred into private hands in reciprocation for money donated to political parties. This appearance of corruption needs to be investigated to gain any confidence in the state political system.

- (j) any other related matter

No submission