



## PEOPLES WESTCONNEX INQUIRY

NSW PARLIAMENT, JUBILEE ROOM - Friday 6 May, 10am – 2pm

### Session 1: Liveable Cities - WestConnex impacts on our suburbs and city

**Alex Lofts, Deputy Mayor, Ashfield Council**

I'd like to thank Jenny for the invitation to speak and for organising this inquiry. I would also like to acknowledge that I am speaking on the land of the Gadigal people and I respect their elders past and present and their living and ongoing culture. I would also quickly like to acknowledge John Kaye, I was very saddened to hear that news and I particularly appreciate his advocacy for public education.

I'm here on behalf of Lucille McKenna and the Ashfield community. I would like to acknowledge some of the activists in our community, namely Sharon Laura and Victor[Storm], Jo Alley, John Hyde, Chris Eleanor and others and Kerry Barlow to demonstrate that this has been a collective effort in Ashfield.

It's been a long campaign and we've always been opposed to this ridiculous project. Our LGA is perhaps the most effected of any in this corridor that's proposed for this project. But we've also been pragmatic in providing a voice for our community to ameliorate some of the impacts that this will have. We began with a public meeting back in December 2013 as part of the beginning of the public campaign. 400 people attended that meeting and from that grew our strategies - as I said, opposition and pragmatism.

This folder which I'm going to donate to the inquiry contains just some of our, it's all I could lug in on the train; it contains just some of our response to this project. It contains our EIS and it contains minutes of our council meetings and Mayoral minutes that we've moved in opposition to the project. It contains expert advice and analysis as to why this project should not go ahead. I'll just demonstrate that by reading from one of our first Mayoral Minutes. The EIS provides detail on the tunnel route but also we are opposed because it shows heavy vehicle movements, dust noise, traffic congestion that would be horrendous for our community during the eight year long period and thereafter. The Haberfield conservation area, an area of state significance will be severely impacted with the loss of many federation homes and the isolation of the western part of Haberfield because the Wattle Street connection will be eighty metres wide. Think of that.

The disruption to Ashfield and Haberfield community will be enormous. It appears there are disproportionate socio-economic and environmental costs to the residents and businesses of Ashfield and Haberfield and there's no acceptable mitigation. Some of the reasons we said that it should be refused; the project should be refused on the basis that the business case for the project has not been made and has not been made public for scrutiny and because it does not make economic sense; it should be refused because the project is



inconsistent with the project objectives and inconsistent with the strategic objectives of NSW government in the absence of detailed proposals for public transport, pedestrian cycling initiatives to encourage a modal shift to more sustainable travel.

It should be refused because it has an adverse impact on heritage in our area; I think we are going to lose fifty three properties from the conservation area, eleven of heritage significance and twenty nine of major contributory influence in that conservation area. This is already happening. Unfortunately demolitions are beginning and unfortunately all of this expertise, all of this analysis was not listened to except in a sort of lip service sort of way so, for example, these places will be demolished but the bricks will be kept if you want to build your own federation home somewhere else and so will the slate be stored. People will be able to take their fireplace somewhere else if they want to, but they are still being demolished.

The other thing, if we think about the social and health impacts. One of the things we are most concerned about are the exhaust stacks near Haberfield Public School for example and near the Ashfield Infants Home, both places of great social significance in our area and some of them of heritage significance as well. People in those institutions are very worried about future enrolments, about how people will feel about putting their children and their infant children near emission stacks, which are going to be unfiltered by the way.

We are also very much worried about the effect on Aboriginal heritage in our council area and one of our recommendations was that anything should be referred to our Aboriginal Consultative Committee.

On a pragmatic basis and I'll really finish quickly. There are still issues we want to fight and I hope they are taken up in parliament. We want to stop the attack on Ashfield Park because they're going to put huge signs in front of that; we want to also stop the loss of trees in one of our other parks. I'll leave that with you that email, so these are actual pragmatic issues you can take up. And thank you, I've had to speak very quickly.