



PEOPLES WESTCONNEX INQUIRY

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

Session 2: Transport - WestConnex modelling, transport issues and alternatives

Simon Lowe, Strategic Transport Planner, Marrickville Council

Thank you Jenny. I'd like to thank Jenny for inviting me here today on behalf of Marrickville Council. Marrickville council remains completely opposed to the WestConnex project. We believe WestConnex is an outdated solution to Sydney's transport needs that will entrench car dependency. It'll divert from essential public transport and undermine the viability.

As far back as early 2013, council voted to formally oppose WestConnex and the widening of the M5 East and it's continued to express its disappointment and disapproval of the entire project at numerous opportunities since then. Just recently, permission was denied for drilling on local roads in the St Peters area, applications which were applied for long before any permission was granted by the Department of Planning.

Council believes that WestConnex - the planning process for WestConnex in the Business Case are completely inadequate. Induced traffic for example, is completely and inflexibly accessed in the EIS. Impacts on public transport patronage and active transport volumes are not examined.

The Updated Business Case actually acknowledges to the construction of new roads can induce more people to travel by car. For the EIS makes no attempt to address any of this. The economic impact assessment in the EIS does not provide justification for the proposal whatsoever and importantly, the economic impact assessment does not consider the negative impacts on urban form and liveability. Yet concerns put forward in submissions on the EIS by many, including councils, were largely brushed aside. Where is the detailed Cost Benefit Analysis? The decision that a motorway is the preferred option appears to have been made long prior to the development of the EIS and prior to the development of a transport business case that includes serious consideration of mixed mode alternatives. A business case that examines this may have been a more effective means of meeting the objectives of the plan for growing Sydney.

We believe the model forecast for daily traffic volumes are completely inconsistent and in congruence with itself. We have serious concerns about WestConnex's contribution to traffic growth, and increased parking demand across the LGA. WestConnex's own figures indicate that King Street is predicted to actually increase, (not what Duncan Gay would have you hear) by fifteen percent by 2031 and Edgeware Road by twenty two percent by 2031. All of which leads to pressures for new or expanding clearways for subsequent amenity and business impacts, particularly along streets like King Street.



In response to Marrickville Council's EIS submission, on the matter of potential clearways along King Street which we've kept raising, WestConnex stated that its position remained unchanged from previous statements and that 'modifications to not form part of the project'. There was nothing new. However, in the same response that WestConnex has made to the EIS to the submission made by the New South Wales scientist and engineer, WestConnex stated, quote, 'Should data to reveal changes associated with actual driver route choice, to be sufficient to explore mitigation measures, Roads and Maritime would develop search interventions as when necessary'. The threat to King Street and other local streets from clearways remains prominent as ever.

Even the most minute travel time savings have been completely oversold. Data shows that that WestConnex will save the average motorist two minutes, forty nine seconds. If the travel time savings of less than five minutes are excluded from the apparent economic benefits of WestConnex, they would fall by more than fifty percent. Our neighbours, Leichhardt Council recently had the Business Case analysed by an independent body which showed that the State Government had failed to calculate the real cost of the project and failed to even realistically consider public transport alternatives. When questioned on ABC radio recently, the Roads Minister told Robbie Buck, "When you commission a report, you basically get the report you ask for'. Which he said because like our council is opposed to WestConnex, then that explains why the report was so damning.

Well, for us at Marrickville Council, that says a lot about the State Government's own reports, especially the WestConnex Business Case. The proposed St Peter's Interchange and related roadworks are environmentally unsound and incongruent with efforts to reduce the impact on climate change.

The proposals will not reduce local traffic volumes but will dump thousands of extra vehicles onto local streets, damage the fabric of local community, displace residents and threaten the vibrancy of our neighbourhoods. We need to move away from 1950s road solutions towards a more viable transport plan for a future of Sydney, one that is centred on reliable, attractive, public transport and one that actually addresses how Sydney can grow and prosper. Thank you.