



PEOPLES WESTCONNEX INQUIRY

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

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

Colin Schroder, Co-convenor EcoTransit

Thank you Jenny for inviting me to speak today. I'm going to talk more about the alternatives to WestConnex as far as public transport is concerned. There are a few observations that we've been making. Since 2004, when petrol prices increased to ninety cents, you know VKT which is 'Vehicle Kilometres Travelled' has actually been flat-lining in Sydney. So the amount of actual kilometres that people have actually been travelling in their cars has actually not been increasing by the amount that it has been.

This trend has been continuing and so the justification to spend sixteen billion dollars or more than sixteen billion dollars on a motorway, which may not even be needed in the future because as petrol prices increase, which they will, despite the current lower prices, we can't see a justification for that, when demand for public transport will be increasing.

The reasons given to support the WestConnex are Parramatta Road has too much traffic and needs relief. The M5 can't cope with the volume of traffic currently using it. It will provide better access to Sydney Airport and contain movements to and from Port Botany - their own modelling indicates that WestConnex will not perform as per these justifications. Many motorists will avoid paying these tolls and use Parramatta Road, Canterbury Road and other local roads to avoid the extra impost on their budgets, increasing not decreasing the traffic volumes on these roads. In addition, there are no funded connections to either Port Botany or the airport. So trucks will most certainly use local roads to save the cost of the tolls. The result will be that people with money may have quicker travelling times using WestConnex while those without will take longer on the congested local roads.

What are the alternatives? Eco Transit has put forward several public transport alternatives that will solve the problems of traffic congestion on Parramatta Road and the M5 and reduce the number of container movements by road in and out of Port Botany. Currently, there are six thousand vehicles using Parramatta Road between 7 and 9am. Many of which have single occupant. If only two thousand of these vehicles could be taken off the road, traffic would flow freely for the tradies and other vehicles who have to use it.

EcoTransit have put forward proposals that would take more than four thousand people per hour from Homebush to Central in nineteen minutes. We call this the Pippita Express. It involves utilising the Olympic Park line and spare capacity on the Western Express tracks. It involves building a new station at Pippita straddling Parramatta Road and the M4 with a large park and ride facility adjacent to it. Details can be found on our YouTube channel.



If you want to Google Eco Transit YouTube, you'll see a three part series: Greiner's Folly and we detail all our public transport alternatives in that. We also have a proposal for light rail down Parramatta Road to Olympic Park and where it would link up with the proposed Parramatta light rail network. This also has the potential to remove thousands of cars from Parramatta Road because of the interchange at Pippita with the Pippita Express as well as the park and ride facility.

WestConnex provide a few on and off ramps which will not connect to the local community whereas a light rail would be able to feed commuters into many commercial and retail areas on Parramatta Road.

EcoTransit has also proposals to reduce traffic volumes on the M5. This includes a new light rail line which we call the East-West Transit Link, would be a continuation of the Dulwich Hill Inner West light rail. It would head east via Marrickville and Sydenham Station, the domestic airport onto Kensington where it would link up with the South East light rail. This will enable commuters travelling from the south west to access the Airport, the southern industrial zone and the Randwick medical/education precincts.

EcoTransit also proposes a new station on the Airport line at Doody Street and the removal of the gate fee at both Airport stations. There was a seventy percent increase in passengers on the Mascot and Greens Square when the gate fee was removed from these two stations. Street is located in the middle of the southern industrial zone and it would no doubt be very well patronized.

EcoTransit has for many years campaigned to have the Port Botany freight line duplicated for its full length to increase the number of train movements to and from the port. The aim would be to shift sixty percent of container traffic onto rail for distribution into Sydney's west. This would drastically reduce the number of container trucks on local roads.

Now, we've done some basic costings of what our transport proposals would cost. We estimate at known cost of similar infrastructure in Australia to be under \$3.5 billion. This compared to over sixteen billion dollars for the WestConnex. It's a saving of some thirteen billion dollars. Thank you.