



# PEOPLES WESTCONNEX INQUIRY

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

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

**Welcome by Chair, Jenny Leong MP, Member for Newtown**

Good morning everybody, my name is Jenny Leong, I'm the member for Newtown and the New South Wales Greens spokesperson on WestConnex or perhaps more appropriately, against WestConnex. I'd like to begin by acknowledging that we are on the land of the Gadigal people of the Eora people and pay our respects to their elders past, present and emerging. This was and ever will be Aboriginal land and I think when we talk about any infrastructure project or any development being imposed on our city and on our communities, we must also remember the ongoing struggle for self-determination of the first peoples of this country and their struggles for justice and for sovereignty. So I pay our respects to any Aboriginal people that are here and acknowledge that their struggle is part of our struggle which is to protect community and to protect our homelands.

I would like to begin first of all by taking a moment which is a little bit outside of the norm but people may be aware that earlier this week, John Kaye, the Green's Upper House MP passed away. It's one of the things which is weird because you go about doing things despite the fact that this crazy stuff occurs so if everyone wouldn't mind just paying a minute of silence to John, I feel better about going about our business if we do that. Thank you.

Thank you very much everyone, I appreciate it. It is wonderful to be here at the People's WestConnex Inquiry. I can say to you that I wish we didn't have to organise this because I wish the New South Wales government had organised their own inquiry and we could be here with members across the political divide and be hearing from experts and councillors and individual members of the public that had made submissions to the planning process. It's probably good to point out that this People's Inquiry was actually initiated out of an idea that we heard because in Victoria, believe it or not, when they have an assessment of State Significant Infrastructure of this kind, when they have a public submission, they also hold an Inquiry to ensure that people can be heard and their views can be heard and responded to as part of that.

Obviously in New South Wales we know that the planning laws and the people have been cut out of many of the decisions around infrastructure and planning and so one of the things that we wanted to do today was to bring people together, experts from different areas of the community and public who have serious concerns about this project and actually to bring what is twenty thousand individual submissions from councillors, councils, individuals, experts and members of the public into the light.



Because really what we're trying to do is to say that it's not okay for the Planning Department to hide them in hundreds of PDF documents on a website; there are serious concerns here, we're talking about a 16.8 billion dollar project and it's time for airing some of those views. I'm sure no one here has time to go through twenty thousand submissions so instead what we're going to do is a quick go through of what are the main areas of concern, main areas of focus that we need to address in the next few hours.

Now as you will probably respect people that want to make a contribution, our panellists have been told they will be stuck to strict five minute times. Mithra here is our timekeeper, she has a bell, she is going to be the one keeping us to time, recognising that while everyone has a lot to say on this issue, at the same time we want to make sure that everyone has a chance to get a say and obviously there will be time and other opportunities for people to have a say and we're also video recording people's contributions, we're live streaming people's contributions and we'll also be providing a report of the contributions. If people do want to stay after the event because they haven't had a chance to have their say they can do so directly to the video so that their views are captured as well.

I'd like to begin before we start the panel by just passing on the apologies from a number of people that haven't been able to make it to support the event and wanted to let us know that they were unable to attend. They include Janet Rice as Senator for Victoria; Lee Rhiannon the Australian Greens Senator for New South Wales; Julie Owens MP, Federal Member for Parramatta; Alex Greenwich the Member for Sydney; Julia Finn MP the Member for Granville, Luke Foley the Member for Auburn; Ron Hoenig the Member for Heffron; Councillor Lucille McKenna the Mayor from Ashfield Council; Sam Iskandar the Mayor [of Marrickville] Council; David Leary from Marrickville Council; John Mant from the City of Sydney Council; Viv May the interim administrator at Aubin City Council; Jim Casey the Green's candidate for Grayndler; Professor Paul Torzillo from the RPA Hospital and Fiona McGregor author and performance artist. I'd also like to pass on the apologies from the Lord Mayor Clover Moore and at this point ask Councillor Jenny Green to come up and read a short statement that the Lord Mayor has provided in support of this event before we continue.