

WestConnex

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## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK SUBMISSION

### WESTCONNEX STAGE 1 – M4 EAST TUNNEL

I, XXXXXXXX, of XXXXXXXX, Concord NSW 2137, make the following submission.

As a concerned resident of Concord, I **REJECT** the WestConnex M4 East Stage 1 development in its current form. I urge the proponents of this project to consider my objections and recommendations as detailed below.

#### 1. DOES NOT CONNECT THE WESTERN SUBURBS TO THE CBD

1.1 The proposal delivers traffic bound for the CBD to a choke point on Dobroyd Pde at the start of City West Link. Therefore, there is no value proposition for city bound traffic, and therefore the proposed tunnel will be ineffective in removing vehicles from Parramatta Rd. In addition, it is likely that traffic will become congested in the tunnel at the exit ramps to City West Link and Parramatta Rd. This will result in elevated levels of pollution in and around the tunnel, while discouraging motorists from using the tunnel.

#### 2. TOO HIGH A COST TO LOCAL INNER WEST COMMUNITIES

2.1 Long established local communities with strong connections to the area are being displaced. Insufficient compensation is being offered for these residents to be able to buy back into the area with 'like-for-like' housing. Consideration must be given to the high number of residents that will be in the market for a small volume of housing in their local area. Therefore, they will be competing against each other for limited housing, forcing prices higher. This will force established residents with strong community links out of the area. This will include families with children in local schools, the elderly and the infirm. This is grossly unfair and places an unacceptably high burden on these residents.

2.2 In the Concord area, the proposed ramps act to isolate the community around Ada St from their local schools/shops/parks etc. Residents on Daly Ave & Franklyn St will have their streets 'fractured' by the portals and significant loss of community and connection.

2.3 Unacceptable loss of land area and trees from Heritage Listed Ashfield Park and Yasmar Juvenile Justice Centre. Ashfield Park has strong historical significance. In addition, it has been mooted that the park will be used as a construction staging point. This will result in unacceptable loss of amenity and disruption to the local

- community. This includes dust, noise and pollution as well as disruption in local streets by trucks and machinery.
- 2.4 It has been mooted that Concord Oval will be used as a construction staging point. This will result in unacceptable loss of a public amenity and disruption to the local community. This includes dust, noise and pollution as well as disruption in local streets by trucks and machinery.
- 2.5 Compensation must be offered to residents directly impacted by the road/tunnel works, not just those in the immediate path. It is unacceptable for residents who were once living in quiet back streets to find they are suddenly adjacent to the ramp/portal of a major arterial road.
- 2.6 Property value guarantees must be offered to all residents impacted by this project.
- 2.7 I have real concerns that this project will undermine and weaken the local community, allowing developers to target remaining house owners with a view to building multi-story apartments. This is of particular concern given the changes to planning laws currently before the State Parliament that would marginalise local communities from the decision making process. It is also well known that the WestConnex project is tied to multi-story apartment development along Parramatta Rd.

### **3. FLAWED DESIGN FOR CONCORD CONNECTIONS**

- 3.1 The current concept design is ill conceived. **I question why the concept design for the Concord connections which shows exposed surface roads carving through small residential streets at cost of demolishing homes, destroying lives, and annihilating a well-established community. Less destructive design options exist.** There are many disused commercial properties and other vacant lands in the vicinity of the Concord connections that should be taken into consideration in alternative designs. It is in the public interest that a design that minimises the destructive impact of the project to the Concord community is properly developed.
- 3.2 Of particular concern to me is the isolation of Concord residents in the area between Parramatta Rd, the end of the M4, and the proposed Cole St exit ramp. These residents will not have access to their homes from the North/East. This is isolating them from their local community, shops/schools/ services etc.
- 3.3 The proposed connections on Sydney St/Concord Rd will increase the congestion in this area. Any traffic travelling from the south on Leicester Ave will need to travel through the intersection on Parramatta Rd, increasing congestion.
- 3.4 If the connections are necessary to direct traffic in/out of the tunnel at Concord as WestConnex is suggesting, then it is reasonable to expect that more traffic will be drawn into this already congested area.
- 3.5 In the first instance, I strongly question the need for a major connection at Concord when there is already a major arterial interchange a few kilometres up the road at Homebush Bay Drive/Centenary Drive. If the intent is to direct traffic from the western suburbs into the tunnel and off Parramatta Rd, then traffic at Concord/Strathfield should be considered as local traffic and remain on current surface roads.

- 3.6 If WestConnex insists on providing an interchange at Concord, I strongly urge the designers to consider alternatives. I have provided my own suggestions in Appendix A and Attachment A of this document.

#### **4. FLAWED COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PROCESS**

- 4.1 During the consultation period, I have become aware that WestConnex is engaged in efforts to secure the properties of my neighbours for this project. This, by its nature, is a secretive process that undermines and fragments my community. It diminishes the purported 'good will' of the consultation process.
- 4.2 I am constantly reminded in the media by both the State and Federal governments that this project is a priority and must be 'fast tracked'. This further undermines my faith in the true value of this 'consultation'.
- 4.3 The WestConnex 'information sessions' at various locations in December and February have been more about presenting a fixed design rather than receiving community feedback. For example, there has been no obvious formal feedback process at these presentations, only random hand written notes on blank pieces of paper.
- 4.4 Often questions are met with a comment such as "we will take that on board", or "we will get back to you". However, there has been no follow-up. My emails sent to WestConnex in January 2014 have not been answered. Technical questions I have asked on the 1300 phone line were initially met with "we will get back to you". Later calls in January and February were met with the response that "the project manager is not well, so we are unable to respond". In desperation, I finally took a day off work on Friday 14th Feb. to meet with WestConnex staff at their office in North Sydney. However, this is only one working day before the February 17th deadline for community feedback. The consultation should be a 'dialogue' where the community increases its understanding and knowledge of the design. Without this dialogue, the community is only engaged on a very superficial level.
- 4.5 It seems that the Stage 1 proposal relies inherently on completion of Stage 2 and Stage 3 to be in any way effective. However, details for Stages 2 & 3 are almost completely absent. This is disingenuous to the community of the Inner West as it delays community engagement with the Stage 2 & 3 areas until after the start of Stage 1. As a result, I feel that the wider community sentiment (i.e. areas affected by Stage 2 & Stage 3) is being suppressed. Regardless of whether this is a deliberate strategy, or otherwise, it acts to undermine the 'good faith' of the consultation process.
- 4.6 Community Consultation occurred over Christmas/New Year Holiday Period. This undermines community engagement. An extension to the Feb. 17th deadline was requested by the community but was rejected by WestConnex and government. This further calls into question the commitment of WestConnex and the government to community engagement.
- 4.7 Maps showing the location of ramps at Homebush, Concord, Haberfield and Ashfield have been farcical in their lack of detail. It is completely clear to the community that WestConnex have more detailed plans as they enter the resumption process of my neighbours' properties. Yet, despite repeated requests from myself and my neighbours, there have been no additional maps beyond the 'thumbnail' sketches shown on the WestConnex publicity brochure. These sketches

are extremely lacking in detail. For example, they do not show Daly Ave in Concord. This quiet suburban street will be obliterated by the proposed exit and entry ramps. To add insult to injury, WestConnex is discussing resumption of these properties with the owners on Daly St (and nearby) in the absence of any further detail.

## **5. CONCERNS OVER AIR QUALITY AT PORTALS AND EXHAUST STACKS**

- 5.1 I do not accept any reduction in air quality in the vicinity of the tunnel portals and exhaust stacks. This means no emissions from portals.
- 5.2 Independent air quality monitoring (world best practice) must be performed before, during and after the proposed construction. This monitoring must be performed by an independent organisation. Monitored data must be made available to the community on the internet in real time. Data must be instantaneous, not averaged. The maximum pollution levels must be reported for each preceding 24 hour period (not just averaged data).
- 5.3 The above-mentioned monitoring must be performed in the immediate vicinity of all portals and exhaust stacks, including on/off ramps at Homebush, Concord, Haberfield and Ashfield.
- 5.4 An independent monitoring regulator must be appointed. They must be independently audited every 6 months as a minimum. Audit reports must be released to the public.
- 5.5 I have real concerns over the proximity of exhaust stacks to schools (Haberfield School) and residential areas (i.e. around Ismay Park, Bland St etc.).

## **6. TRAFFIC REDIRECTION AFTER PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

- 6.1 There has been no information provided by WestConnex on traffic flows after the development. I have heard anecdotally that traffic travelling east on the M4 may be allowed to make a right turn onto Parramatta Rd (currently this is not possible). This would add to congestion at the end of the M4 and also at the Parramatta Rd/Leicester Ave/Concord Rd intersection. It has also been mooted that traffic on City West Link at Victoria Rd may be prioritised over Victoria Rd traffic travelling to the CBD. This would result in additional congestion on Victoria Rd which is already a choke point. No traffic flow changes have been explained to the community. Any changes to existing traffic flows, in particular those changes which prioritise traffic on the proposed M4 East tunnel, **MUST BE CLEARLY EXPLAINED TO THE COMMUNITY.**

## **7. TRAFFIC FLOWS DURING DEVELOPMENT**

- 7.1 There has been no explanation to the community of altered traffic flows during the construction process.

**8. NOISE POLLUTION**

- 8.1 I do not accept any increase in noise pollution.
- 8.2 Noise levels must be monitored before, during and after construction of the proposed development.
- 8.3 Noise abatement must be addressed at the source, and must not rely on alterations to adjacent property/amenity.

**9. VISUAL POLLUTION**

- 9.1 I do not accept any increase in visual pollution. In particular, WestConnex has indicated that the off ramp connecting to the M4 at Concord will be above ground surface level. This is not acceptable and the off ramp must be removed from the design.

**10. BUSINESS CASE**

- 10.1 The business case supporting the project must be released to the community. I am concerned that traffic projections for recent projects (Sydney's Cross City Tunnel & Brisbane's Clem7 motorway) have grossly over estimated actual traffic flows. This has resulted in tax-payer funded bailouts.
- 10.2 WestConnex does not have any traffic studies supporting the business case. I cannot accept a proposal of this size and impact to the community without supporting traffic studies.

## **APPENDIX A – ALTERNATE DESIGNS FOR CONCORD CONNECTIONS**

It can be expected that the proposed WestConnex concept design for the Concord connections will have detrimental effects on traffic flows in our local area. The traffic travelling southbound on Concord Rd and westbound on Patterson St will be drawn to the choke point at the traffic lights on Sydney St. In addition, traffic travelling north/south on Leicester Ave will have to travel across Parramatta Rd intersection to Sydney St.

### **A1 ALTERNATE ENTRY RAMP FOR TRAFFIC APPROACHING FROM THE SOUTH ON CONCORD RD**

An additional left hand lane between Patterson St and Sydney St would allow traffic to flow smoothly onto the entry ramp (refer Attachment A). In addition, left turning traffic on Patterson St could have the option of turning directly onto the entry ramp, or continue south along Concord Rd towards the Parramatta Rd intersection.

The road widening would require the resumption of properties in this area. However, I believe a number of these properties are already owned by the RMS. In addition, the total land area of the properties should be resumed, not just a small frontage. This will allow the 'greening' of land adjacent to the ramp for a green verge, pedestrian footpath, cycle way etc. The green verge will also act to separate the ramp from adjacent residential property.

### **A2 ALTERNATIVE ENTRY RAMP FOR EAST BOUND TRAFFIC ON PARRAMATTA RD**

This proposal, in conjunction with the westbound exit ramp, would require widening of Parramatta Rd on the northern side (refer Attachment A). The proposal allows for the block of units to remain at the corner of Parramatta Rd and the M4 (143-147 Parramatta Rd – refer Figure 4). The widening would require the resumption of several commercial properties between Franklyn St and 65-67 Parramatta Rd.

Many of these properties are currently derelict or being sold for development (refer Figure 1 to Figure 3).

The proposal (refer Attachment A), is for an entry ramp descending eastbound into the tunnel from the right hand lane of Parramatta Rd. This would allow the smooth transition of traffic into the tunnel from Parramatta Rd. Additionally, the road widening would allow for three lanes to continue eastward on Parramatta Rd, and also a right turning lane for traffic turning south into Wentworth Rd (similar to existing arrangement). Further, the centre lane ramp results in no loss of amenity to streets connecting to Parramatta Rd (Franklyn/Lloyd George/Coles); and no loss of pedestrian access.



Figure 1 – Sale of land (auction 2nd March 2014) at the corner of Melbourne St/Parramatta Rd.



Figure 2 – Derelict property 69 Parramatta Rd.



Figure 3 – Derelict properties on Parramatta Rd.



Figure 4 – Apartments at 143-147 Parramatta Rd would not be affected by the alternative ramp suggestions.

**A3 ALTERNATIVE EXIT RAMP FOR SOUTH/WEST BOUND TRAFFIC**

An exit ramp is suggested in the left lane westbound on Parramatta Rd between Wentworth Rd and Grantham St (refer to Attachment A). Emerging traffic can take an immediate left hand turn into Wentworth Ave, or continue straight ahead on Parramatta Rd. This exit ramp would utilise the natural fall of the land (approx 1.7% gradient) to shorten the surface road.

**A4 ALTERNATE ENTRY RAMP FOR TRAFFIC APPROACHING FROM THE SOUTH ON LEICESTER AVE**

The suggested alternative shown in Attachment A utilises land under current development review and currently largely vacant. This development area is known as the 'Strathfield Triangle'.

**A4.1 STRATHFIELD TRIANGLE**

There is an area currently under development (refer Figure 5) which is known as the Strathfield Triangle. As this area is currently mostly open space with houses flagged for demolition, it should offer an opportunity for a construction staging point with direct access through a portal into the tunnel. Photos of the land are provided in Figure 7 to Figure 9.



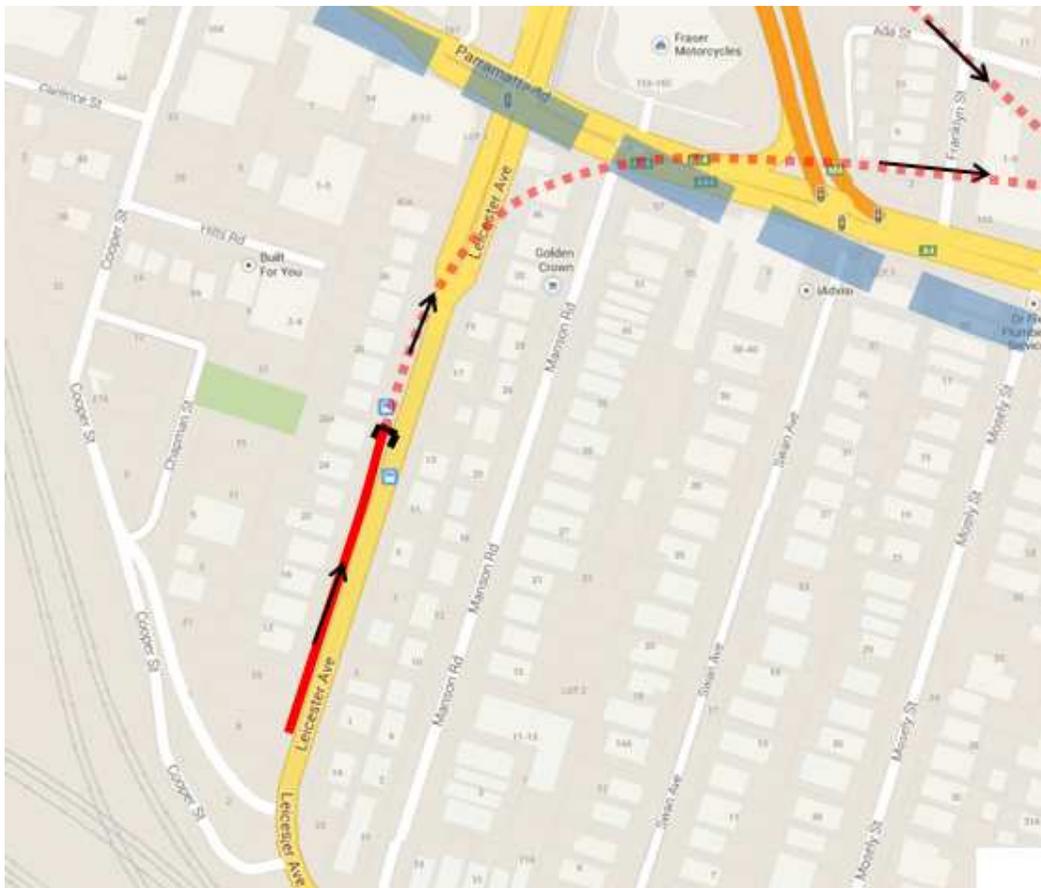
Figure 5 – Map showing location of 'Strathfield Triangle' development area.

**A4.2 OPTION 1 – COOPER ST ENTRY RAMP**

Traffic in the left lane of Leicester Ave can move smoothly onto an entry-ramp at the approximate location of Cooper St (refer Attachment A). This will relieve congestion at the Parramatta Rd and Sydney St intersections as the traffic does not need to travel through these intersections. The southern end of Cooper St would be moved slightly to the NE to make way for the new ramp.

**A4.3 OPTION 2 – LEICESTER ST ENTRY RAMP**

A second alternative is shown in Figure 6. This has similar advantages to the Cooper St option, but would also utilise the rising land gradient to allow a shorter surface road before entry into the portal.



**Figure 6 – Alternative entry ramp using Leicester Ave. This will require resumption of properties on the western side of Leicester Ave for an additional left lane descending into the entry ramp.**



Figure 7 – View of 'Strathfield Triangle' development area taken from the corner of Cooper St and Leicester Ave.



Figure 8 – View of ‘Strathfield Triangle’ development area taken from Cooper St looking toward Leicester Ave.



Figure 9 – Photos of open areas and property fenced off for demolition in the ‘Strathfield Triangle’.

# **ATTACHMENT A**

## **MAP OF CONCORD AREA SHOWING ALTERNATE RAMP OPTIONS**

ATTACHED TO HARD COPY REPORT IN PAPER SIZE A2 (COLOUR PRINT).

REFER FILE: Concord Strathfield Connections 17Feb2014.pdf