STAGE 1 - M4 East

Heritage Interpretation Plan posted

AMBS Ecology and Heritage, on behalf of the construction contractor, has published a Stage 1 Heritage Interpretation Plan. This plan, as mandated by conditions of approval for Stage 1, has been drafted to “identify and interpret the key heritage values and stories of heritage items and heritage conservation areas impacted by the SSI.” The Heritage Interpretation Plan can be found on Local Updates.

Excavation Report released

AMBS Ecology and Heritage, on behalf of the Stage 1 construction contractor, has released its summary and findings of archaeological investigations carried out during the construction phase of Stage 1. The document has been released in two volumes, Excavation Report: Historical Archaeological Investigations - Volume 1 and Excavation Report: Historical Archaeological Investigations - Volume 2. Both can be found on Local Updates.

Media articles on fungi health risks in WestConnex tunnels

Two articles, one in the Sydney Morning Herald (SMH) and one on Metispd.com have summarised an independent report citing high levels of fungi in the M4 East tunnel, as compared to ‘normal’ levels of fungi in the open air away from the tunnels. The articles – Matt O’Sullivan’s Extremely high’ fungi in WestConnex tunnels pose health risk” and the Electrical Trades Union’s (or ETU) 600 workers walk off WestConnex project after testing reveals ‘extremely high’ air contamination” note that workers have become concerned about health risks in light of “extreme contamination”. In response to this concern, 600 members of the ETU walked off WestConnex project sites on 15 March 2019.

Development application (DA) for proposed Woolworths at 202 Parramatta Road, Ashfield

Council’s Strategic Planning staff are currently assessing the above DA, which is described as “Demolition of existing structures, tree removal and construction of a Woolworths supermarket with liquor outlet and café over an at-grade and basement car park, signage and associated landscaping and drainage works.” Staff from the former WestConnex Unit are assessing the DA with reference to its interface with WestConnex M4 East, along with issues that have been raised by Haberfield-Ashfield residents in 2018-19. The DA is available to view at Council’s Ashfield Service Centre.

M4 East Air Quality Community Consultative Committee (AQCCC)

Council staff recently attended a meeting of this committee, which includes representatives from the project construction contractor (and their air quality consultants), the project owner (WestConnex), relevant State agencies, relevant councils and community members. Items discussed included: a project update from the contractor; a presentation and discussion of air quality monitoring and readings; an overview of air quality related complaints; and an overview of a recent website update relevant to air quality information. Further information on the M4 East AQCCCs, including air quality reports and AQCCC meeting minutes, is available on the project website.

STAGE 2 – New M5

Media article on water leakage into tunnels

An article in the weekend (23 March 2019) edition of the Australian Financial Review points to unexpected levels of water flowing into (and through) Stage 2 tunnels. The article, No problem with water leakage into WestConnex New M5 tunnels notes that the unpredicted levels of water are prompting contractors to grout and seal more extensively than initially
expected. This additional work may inflate the cost of this stage of the project. The article is available to subscribers on the Australian Financial Review’s website.

Media article about omitted complaints

In its 26 March 2019 edition, The Inner West Courier published an article about omitted complaints: Westconnex complaints fail. It reports the findings of the Department of Planning and Environment (DP&E) on the complaints register of WestConnex Stage 2; where DP&E found that at least 30 complaints had been omitted from the register maintained by the contractor. The article can be found on the Inner West Courier’s website.

Night work & weekend work – Campbell Street, Crown Street, and Princes Highway, St Peters

The Stage 2 contractor has announced that night works will be undertaken - first along Campbell Street at 8am to 6pm on the evening of 30 March, then along Princes Highway from 1 to 3 April and 8 to 10 April (7pm to 5am each evening), then along Crown Street from 7pm to 5am on the evenings of 2 and 5 April 2019. For further details, see Notice N655 at Local Updates.

STAGE 3A – M4–M5 Link Tunnels

Geotechnical Investigations – William Street, Leichhardt

The Stage 3A contractor has issued a notice for geotechnical survey works to be undertaken along William Street, Leichhardt, commencing 4 April 2019. These works are expected to take up to three weeks to complete, weather and conditions permitting. Works will be conducted from 7am to 6pm weekdays and 8am to 1pm on Saturdays. For further information, see Notification MT011B on Local Updates.

Geotechnical Investigations – Applebee Street, St Peters

The Stage 3A contractor has issued a notice for geotechnical survey works to be undertaken along Applebee Street, St Peters, commencing 26 March 2019. These works are expected to take up to three weeks to complete, weather and conditions permitting. Works will be conducted from 7am to 6pm weekdays and 8am to 1pm on Saturdays. For further information, see Notification MT021B on Local Updates.

Updated Staging Report released

Following the February approval of a modification to its plans, the Stage 3A contractor has released updated versions of its Staging Report. The Staging Report is a document that describes the sequence in which parts of Stage 3A are to be carried out. Under Conditions of Approval A12 and A13, this document must be kept accurate and up-to-date. The March 2019 revision of the Staging Report can be found on Local Updates.

Construction Noise & Vibration Impact Statements posted for Haberfield and Annandale sites

The Stage 3A contractor has released the final statement in the series. It summarises the noise and vibration analysis of the Northcote Street construction site. The statements cover ‘normal’ background noise for areas around a site, expected noise levels for different conditions while the site is operation and mitigation measures, including ‘at-receiver’ noise mitigation. The Northcote site CNVIS can be found on Local Updates.

STAGE 3B – M4–M5 Link Rozelle Interchange

Stage 3B Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)

Council and relevant State agencies are in the process of assessing the Stage 3B Site Establishment Management Plan (SEMP) and the following Stage 3B CEMP sub-plans: Traffic and transport and access; Noise and vibration; Flora and fauna; Air quality; Soil and
surface water; and Non-Aboriginal heritage. The following final three sub-plans will be assessed by State agencies only: Aboriginal cultural heritage; Waste Management; and Groundwater.

Stage 3B regulator briefing session

Council staff recently attended the above session, along with relevant Stage agencies and other major stakeholders, including Sydney Airport. The session’s aims were to: establish positive working relationships between project team, client and key stakeholders; clarify project designs and changes compared to the EIS; and confirm review times and expectations for project delivery. The session included a presentation on the project’s scope, status update and construction overview. It explained the contractor’s management approach on environmental approvals, including noise & vibration, traffic & transport and water management. An overview of construction works, design consultations and complaints management was given. There was discussion of the document review process, including an overview of project timelines and milestones, roles and responsibilities and expectations for document review.

GENERAL

WestConnex Local Area Improvement Strategy (LAIS)

In 2017-18, Council developed the above strategy. It includes a costed a set of concept designs for traffic calming measures to minimise the impact of additional traffic on local and residential streets created by WestConnex. Council had resolved to write to Roads & Maritime Services (RMS) seeking $29M of funding for detailed design, consultation and implementation of these works. RMS and Council staff recently met to discuss the strategy. RMS has requested additional background information to assist with their consideration of Council’s request.

Meetings with DP&E Post Approvals team staff

In 2019, Council staff have been meeting monthly with staff from DP&E’s Post Approvals team to discuss WestConnex issues. Staff from DP&E’s and EPA’s compliance teams also attend if available. At a recent meeting, the following issues were discussed: Stage 2 St Peters cumulative impacts & footpath issues; property condition reporting process (all stages); Stage 1 & 2 Council maintenance costs from residual lands handover; likely deadlines and possibility of community input on draft Stage 3B CEMP sub-plans; the process for undertaking consistency assessments for Stage 3A tunnel depth changes; and removal of Buruwan Park for Stage 3.

Meeting with Centre for Air pollution, energy and health Research (CAR)

Council staff recently attended a meeting at CAR at the Woolcott Institute for Medical Research at Glebe. At this meeting were staff from Inner West Council, other councils, other stakeholders and interested members of the community. The purpose of this meeting was to bring interested stakeholders together with CAR researchers working in this area to find out more about what type of health assessment tool is needed and discuss what is feasible based on current scientific understanding of air pollution and health. At this meeting, staff explained that Inner West Council was seeking to work in partnership with all organisations represented at the meeting on collaborative grant-funded projects that can lead to a better understanding of WestConnex air quality impacts.

Council’s new Strategic Transport & Infrastructure team

The above team has recently been formed within Council’s Strategic Planning branch. All staff from the former WestConnex Unit have moved into this team and their responsibilities have been extended to other large infrastructure projects, including Sydney Metro City & Southwest and Western Harbour Tunnel. Council is currently recruiting a manager for the team.
Meeting with University of Sydney School of Public Health

Council staff recently attended a meeting at the above school to discuss a proposed research project Sydney Travel & Health Study (Part 2: motorway evaluation). At the meeting, staff from Sydney University, NSW Health and other stakeholder groups assessed the likely value of this project and how it could be supported, funded and progressed. The project would draw on the results of a prior transport survey conducted in the Inner West area to assess health and transport impacts of WestConnex.

Media article on WestConnex related property damage

An article in the 19 March 2019 edition of the Inner West Courier “The sinking feeling as cracks show” covers the previously-reported satellite data indicating that premises as far as 300 meters away from tunnelling sites may be subsiding as a result from the works. The article can be found on the Inner West Courier’s website.

Media article about children & air pollution

The Inner West Courier has published an article about parent and student protests on Thursday, 21 March 2019 in front of schools across the Inner West. The article, Parents and children rally to clear air recounts the dust-masked demonstrations calling for an immediate end to tunnelling in Sydney, as well as supporting the initiative to install filters in WestConnex ventilation stacks. The article can be found on the Inner West Courier’s website.