



INNER WEST COUNCIL

**Initial assessment of
WestConnex Stage 3 (M4-M5 Link) determination
by Council staff
7 May 2018**

On Friday 27 April 2018 the Minister for Planning announced approval of WestConnex Stage 3. The Minister's media release is available on the Department of Planning & Environment's (DP&E's) [news webpage](#). The Instrument of Approval, Environmental Assessment (EA) Report and associated documents are available on DP&E's [major projects website](#).

A previously reported, Council had raised a multitude of issues in its Stage 3 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) submission, many based on Council's and the community's experiences with Stages 1 and 2. Whilst all of these issues were assessed in the Stage 3 Submissions & Preferred Infrastructure Report (SPIR), Council expressed disappointment that the assessment had not resulted in major changes to the project to reduce its impact. The determination has not altered this situation – the project as approved is essentially the same as described in the EIS.

It is acknowledged the DP&E's determination of Stage 3 includes *some* tangible improvements to management/mitigation measures for Stage 3 compared to Stages 1 and 2, including:

- establishing the White Bay truck marshalling area, which would avert the problems of queuing and ad-hoc marshalling in local streets, as was experienced for Stage 1;
- a condition that specifically prevents trucks accessing the White Bay marshalling area to use Robert Street, Rozelle – consistent with Council's view;
- GIS tracking of project trucks, which will assist DP&E compliance officers with enforcement of approved truck routes;
- for Haberfield-Ashfield, a preference for construction site Option A, which would keep construction activities further below the surface within existing Stage 1 sites rather than creating impacts on new sites on Parramatta Road;
- a further environmental assessment required if Option B is pursued;
- if Option A is pursued, it appears project trucks would not need to use the two sensitive routes previously proposed to access one of the Parramatta Road construction sites, i.e. the route that includes Liverpool Road and the route that includes Darley Road, Tebutt Street and surrounding streets – Council had previously raised concerns about these routes as they include residential streets and the Ashfield commercial centre;
- appointment of a Public Liaison Officer to answer queries on the project and a Community Complaints Mediator to manage complaints process issues;
- preparation of a Utilities Management Strategy, appointment of a Utility Coordination Manager and establishment of a Utilities Coordination Committee to manage utilities works so that impacts on residents are reduced;
- appointment of an Acoustic Advisor to oversee development of a Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan and Noise Insulation Program;
- preparation and implementation (in consultation with councils) of a Road Network Performance Plan *prior to* operation (not post-operation as is the case for Stages 1 and

- 2), which sets out measures to manage predicted local traffic impacts - this would potentially lend support for Council's *Local Area Improvement Strategy* (LAIS); and
- a review of the Road Network Performance Plan post-operation.

The EA report describes a number of other processes the DP&E considers to be improvements, such as implementation of best-practice dust management, consultation when developing construction management plans and the Premier's recently-announced reforms for regulation of emissions from tunnel ventilation facilities. The degree to which these could be considered significant improvements remains to be seen. Some of the other processes identified by DP&E in the EA report as being beneficial are essentially the same as processes that have applied to Stages 1 and 2. These include establishment of Air Quality Community Consultative Committees (AQCCCs) and a Design Review Panel to oversee development of a Stage 3 *Urban Design & Landscape Plan* (UDLP). Again, the degree to which these processes are beneficial remains to be seen.

Despite these improvements, it remains that Council has many serious issues with WestConnex Stage 3, most of which have been raised Council's submission on the Stage 3 EIS and comments on the Stage 3 SPIR. These include:

- Council continues to oppose WestConnex, preferring that no stage of the project had been planned, approved or constructed –preferring that the significant funding had been devoted to public transport solutions to Sydney's traffic problems;
- business case and funding process issues are still not addressed – Council had called for an inquiry into the project to further investigate these kinds of strategic planning issues prior to Stage 3 proceeding;
- health issues not adequately addressed – although in the EA report the DP&E states that health issues *have* been addressed, Council does not agree – Council had called for a health study into Stages 1 and 2 prior to Stage 3 proceeding;
- relegation of a number of important construction, mitigation and management measures to a range of construction management plans – although Council (and in some cases the community) would be consulted in the development of most of these plans, there is no guarantee that Council's and the community's concerns would be addressed;
- similarly, relegation of design details to the UDLP, and no guarantee that Council's and the community's concerns will be addressed;
- no filtration of ventilation stacks or in-tunnel filtration;
- acknowledgment in the EA report that that elevated levels of air pollution would result from the project at some locations adjacent to surface roads, e.g. at the ANZAC Bridge and Canal Road, St Peters – Council disagrees with DP&E that the health risks of this are acceptable;
- no overarching night curfew on construction;
- continued concern about use of Johnston Street (southbound) by project trucks travelling from the White Bay marshalling site to the Annandale-Camperdown dive-site;
- possible use of Darley Road, Tebbutt Street and surrounding roads by trucks travelling from White Bay to the Parramatta Road construction site if Haberfield-Ashfield Option B is adopted;
- a range of traffic safety and parking issues associated with the Darley Road dive-site, and disappointment that a potentially lower-impact alternative spoil loading option was ruled out for that site;
- cumulative traffic impacts on James Craig Road and surrounding roads and intersections from trucks travelling to/from the White Bay marshalling area and other construction and industrial uses proposed for White Bay and Glebe Island;
- no overarching ban on heavy vehicles on local roads or other roads with sensitive uses;

- no reduced speed limit proposed for all project trucks;
- although the approval would appear to support Council's LAIS, funding for this strategy is not guaranteed, nor is there a commitment to funding surface improvements on all roads where traffic has been reduced by WestConnex;
- removal of Buruwan Park for widening of The Crescent has been strongly opposed by Council, even though it is acknowledged that new areas of open space would be created – note that Council has written to Roads & Maritime Services (RMS) to express its opposition to the removal of Buruwan Park;
- there has been no consideration of rights-of-way for future light rail to White Bay & Balmain in the design of the RRY recreation area;
- no guarantee at this stage that all residual lands would be put to community use, delivered to Council fully-constructed; and
- whilst the RRY site recreation area would be beneficial, it would be compromised by permanent motorway facilities, tunnel portals and a temporary construction area for the Western Harbour Tunnel (WHT).