



Australian Institute
of Landscape Architects
1966/2016

Thursday 26 May 2016

Attn: Hon. Darren Chester MP
Minister for Infrastructure and Transport
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Attn: Hon. Duncan Gay
NSW Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney, NSW 2000

RE: Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) response to WestConnex

AILA is the growing national advocacy body representing 2,500 active and engaged landscape architects, and promoting their crucial role in shaping the world around us.

AILA is concerned about the WestConnex project. We believe it will have a detrimental impact on the city through its surface connections, portals and ventilation buildings and isn't optimising its potential for urban revitalisation and public transport. The motorways currently approved and underway have the potential to increase traffic and congestion in highly valued parts of the city.

AILA has the following issues and recommendations.

1. Timing of Environmental Impact Statements

The EIS process is the chance to get a project right without the pressure of contractors on board. It allows engagement with the community and the testing of different ideas. It is in effect a design process to avoid impacts rather than just mitigate for them. EIS's so far have been produced after the contractors are engaged, minimising the scope and desire for design exploration to avoid impacts and limiting the projects ability to address input from the community.

Recommendation - Stage 3 and all subsequent motorway projects should produce the EIS before appointing contractors - for design quality, community engagement and cost reasons.

2. Stage 3

AILA accepts that stage 3 of the motorway must be built so that the traffic using stages 1 and 2 is not forced to the surface, however the Stage 3 must respect the context of the unique villages of Rozelle

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Lilyfield Glebe and Balmain and the potential of the Bays Precinct area.

Recommendation - It is imperative that stage 3 of the motorway integrates the Bays Precinct work, minimises its impact on Rozelle Lilyfield Glebe and Balmain and helps provide a 'healing' of this industrial, disconnected area with improved public space and connections between the suburbs and the harbour.

3. Public Transport

WestConnex must enable high quality road based public transport options, that if not possible to build immediately, must be prioritised and set down in a public strategy.

Light Rail is the most fundamental road based system in both improving cities and moving people around. This is the desired approach to Parramatta Road with some of the most congested and noisy environments in the city. Bus Rapid Transport has great potential in finer grained narrower environments where Light Rail is not possible. Cycle routes and footpaths need to be included. All these public transport systems and networks must be designed to create more productive and liveable environments.

Recommendation – Consider public transport as part of the motorway design development process, not a separate activity. Publish public transport recommendations in advance of or at the same time as announcements of the motorway.

4. Tunnels portals and surface streets

WestConnex locates much of its transport system in tunnels, however there is much work at the surface level affecting communities. There is also the impact of people spending significant time underground that needs consideration.

Recommendation - The portals and street level impacted areas are designed to improve liveability and contribute to revitalising the city, with targets or KPIs to meet as part of the delivery. This includes:

- Improved or better streets and footpath connections
- Improved open space (sportsfields, parks, new development opportunities), by utilising landbridges and smarter cut and cover solutions
- Increased greening, with horticultural and biodiverse approaches to landscaping
- Improved quality of the design of associated built form, that address context and character
- Improve the visual experience from a driver and passenger perspective, mitigating boredom and monotony, as well as using improved visual experience as a form of driver wayfinding

5. Green Infrastructure and healthier environments

Sydney is renowned for its urban forest and greenery but this is under threat. Additional roads without a green infrastructure component will only add to the urban heat island and affect the health of our built environment.



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Recommendation - There should be a net improvement in tree canopy shade and green infrastructure. Impacts on existing parks and significant trees should be avoided. The motorway work should respond to the Sydney Green Grid.

We welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss our recommendations with you further.

Yours Sincerely

Daniel Bennett
National President
Australian Institute of Landscape Architects