



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Federation Chamber**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

**WestConnex Project**

**SPEECH**

**Wednesday, 4 May 2016**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

<b>Date</b>	Wednesday, 4 May 2016	<b>Source</b>	House
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<b>Questioner</b>		<b>Responder</b>	
<b>Speaker</b>	Albanese, Anthony, MP	<b>Question No.</b>	

**Mr ALBANESE** (Grayndler) (10:00): Last Saturday, I attended a public meeting in Rozelle, following an invitation by a member of the Annandale WestConnex Action Group who came to one of the street meetings that I regularly hold on Saturday mornings. It was an expression of concern by the community about the lack of proper planning for the WestConnex Project and particularly the impact it will have in Rozelle. At the moment, it is unclear how many, if any, houses will be resumed, as has occurred in Haberfield. It is unclear where the route will go. It is unclear where any exhaust stacks will be placed. And that uncertainty is creating enormous concern in my local community.

This is an example of planning gone wrong. The WestConnex Project has been funded before the planning or the business case have been conducted. We established Infrastructure Australia to get the process right—do the planning, do the business case, then receive the funding—to make sure projects actually achieve outcomes. And yet in last night's budget it was confirmed that Infrastructure Australia's budget will be cut by 25 per cent—precisely the wrong direction. Infrastructure New South Wales identified freight to Port Botany as the priority for roads and rail in terms of Sydney's urban congestion challenges. The WestConnex Project solves neither.

The WestConnex Project of course goes to St Peters. I wrote to the WestConnex Delivery Authority chairman, Tony Shepherd, saying this: 'From what has been published, the proposal to widen the M5 and dump traffic at St Peters interchange is absurd. The notion that delivering additional traffic to King Street, Newtown, and parallel congested back-routes represents proper planning is beyond belief.' I wrote that on 9 November 2014.

It appears that the same mistakes are being made with the rest of this project. That is why I have requested an audit of the entire WestConnex Project, as well as of the government's infrastructure plans, because it is clear that—with regard to the East West Link fiasco, the collapse of Perth Freight Link in the courts and the blow-out on WestConnex from \$10 billion to \$16.6 billion—this is a failure of government planning, which is why the national Auditor-General should conduct an audit into the government's infrastructure programs.