

Candidate Positions on Wollie and WestConnex

Report on results of survey

Liberal, ALP and Green candidates for the State election in the electorates bearing on the Wollie area, were asked to let us know their positions by ticking one of four boxes – see the candidates' survey document overleaf. The electorates were Newtown, Summer Hill, Canterbury, Lakemba, Oatley, Kogarah, Rockdale and Heffron. The general position for each candidate can be read from the following (highly summarised) policies of the three main parties– but remember these are politicians' commitments. Candidates' individual variations and specific comments are also provided.

Liberal – build WestConnex in full, funded by selling the 'poles and wires'. Wollie Valley a likely route involving loss of 2 ha of bushland. Toll costs not highlighted. <http://www.nsw.gov.au/initiative/state-infrastructure-strategy-westernharbourtunnel>

ALP – don't sell poles and wires, build the M4 limb of WestConnex, abandon the M4-M5 link, re-route the M5E to avoid bushland and require a proper process to evaluate it. Toll costs not mentioned. Full statement at p21 of ALP's *A Better Way* (paste link into browser): https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/nswlabor/pages/2397/attachments/original/1424314627/A_Better_Way_-_Labor's_Fully_Funded_Infrastructure_Plan.pdf?1424314627

Greens – Abandon WestConnex altogether; pump much more funding into public transport. For full policy download pdf file at the end of their press release at <http://nsw.greens.org.au/news/nsw/greens-launch-transport-plan-liveable-communities>

Peter Stevens, who co-ordinated the survey, comments

Liberal – Thought most likely to win election. Some route modifications have proved possible (eg. saving Ashfield Park promised) when politics (Mr Borsak's vote) required it. However, we will not be told the M5E route until a tenderer has been selected and then it will be too late to seek route changes.

ALP – Unlikely to win Government, but could be more influential after election. Political considerations in local marginal seats may have influenced M4/M5 proposals. Hasn't proposed delay on M4 until business case made public. Does suggest that Wollie bushland and other green spaces would be avoided.

Greens – Will not win Government, but could have major influence if there is a hung Parliament. Most likely to give bushland protection high priority.

Actual survey responses by candidates are shown, by electorate, in a separate chart, and specific comments, where provided, are shown below and overleaf.

Newtown – Jenny Leong – Greens "The Greens believe that all levels of government should immediately hand over control of land to the Regional Park so that the Wollie Creek Regional Park consolidation can be completed."

Summer Hill – Julie Passas – Liberal "The government is committed through the EIS to ensure that the absolute minimum impact is achieved on the local environment!"

Summer Hill – Max Phillips – Greens "I am unequivocally against WestConnex and concerned about its impact on Wollie Creek, as well as many other areas of the Inner West. Please Like check out my Facebook page as I post quite a bit of info about WestConnex. <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Max-Phillips-for-Summer-Hill/244036502450107> Also the Marrickville Greens website: <http://marrickvillegreens.wordpress.com/>"

Canterbury – Linda Burney – ALP "Mike Baird's plans for Westconnex are proceeding without consultation, a business case, traffic modelling or an environmental impact statement. Labor will release more information in relation to this project in the lead up to the state election."

Canterbury – Linda Eisler – Greens "I support position 4. That is no interference with Wollie Creek bushland or creek. The money would be best spent improving our Public Transport System. As a Canterbury Councillor I moved the following motion on the WestConnex on 25th September 2014:

That Council:

1. Joins Marrickville Council in formally opposing the WestConnex motorway and widening of the M5 East and any other motorway proposal that will have negative impacts on the Wolli Creek Valley's bushland or Tempe Wetlands, and
2. Request the General Manager to write to the State Government asking them to commit to the preservation of the Wolli Creek Valley's bushland and Tempe Wetlands and to ensure that no roads, or construction of roads, impinge upon these areas.

It was carried.

Lakemba – Chris Garvin - Greens “I’m supporting motion 4.”

Oatley – O’Bray Smith - ALP “The NSW Labor Party has serious concerns about the lack of consultation with locals and community groups. This has left significant concerns about the impact & disruption on the local environment.”

Oatley – Phillippa Clark – Greens “The Greens proudly support better public transport, including the restoration of services to Mortdale, Kogarah, Rockdale, Beverly Hills and Kingsgrove.”

Kogarah – Chris Minns - ALP “I have been lucky enough to tour the Wolli Creek bushland area with the preservation society and have been amazed at the diversity and importance of this natural oasis on our doorstep, frankly I didn’t even know it was there. I was recently informed that the canopied tree area is vital to migrating bird populations and one of the only areas left in the Sydney basin. I am very concerned at the level of secrecy that seems to be attached to this project and believe, at the very least, full transparency and communication is an absolute obligation of the government when it comes to local residents.”

Kogarah – Brent Heber – Greens “The Greens are, as always, your unique political allies in the ongoing battle for protection of The Bardwell Valley. Myself and all the other local candidates have attended your events and Greens MP Mehreen Faruqi is of course doing everything she can to expose Westconnex for the poorly planned, waste of public funding it is. The Greens position has and always will be for protection of our environment first and foremost, increasing public transport, transparency in planning and clean politics, all issues that declare our firm opposition to Westconnex, the M5 expansion and the cut and cover threat to Bardwell and Wolli Valleys. Thank you for the opportunity to comment, if there are any further questions from your membership please don't hesitate to contact me further.

Rockdale – Steve Kamper – ALP “Both myself and my party have serious concerns about the way the local community has been treated during the planning phase of the Westconnex. The lack of consultation with residents and community groups has left significant and justified concerns about the impact on the environment and our homes. I have been calling on the Government to rule out placing an exhaust stack in the Bardwell Valley, and I will continue to press the Government for answers and solutions to community concerns. As a lifelong local, I have a deep appreciation for both Wolli Creek and our native wetlands throughout Rockdale and along the F6 corridor, and will fight hard to ensure we do not lose our green space.

Rockdale – Madeleina Snowdon – Greens “Both myself and the Greens are strongly opposed to the WestConnex development due Devastating effects it will cause to the local flora and fauna and additionally the loss of local playing fields and parks.”

Heffron – Ron Hoenig – ALP. Mr Hoenig didn’t select an option but sent us plenty of material on his position, some of which is abstracted here. “More than two years ago I described the [WestConnex] project as a 10 billion dollar lemon. Now it’s become a 20 billion dollar lemon. Nowhere in the WestConnex proposal are there any realistic costings (or any costings at all), there is no modelling, there are no plans and those proposing it don’t even know the route.” “ Be assured I will continue to fight and use every avenue available to ensure that people’s homes and vital bushlands are not destroyed by an arrogant and reckless government.” Ron also referred us to YouTube clips of some of his speeches at <http://www.youtube.com/RonHoenig>.