



MEDIA RELEASE

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Third gas leak in a week halts work in WestConnex tunnel

Construction workers have been forced to evacuate a WestConnex road tunnel for a third time in less than a week following another gas leak.

Multiple units from Fire and Rescue NSW were this morning called to the Parramatta Road on and off ramps to the new tunnel in Haberfield following the latest report of gas in the tunnel.

The Electrical Trades Union said that despite gas now being detected three times in the same section of WestConnex, project management from the joint venture building the motorway — CPB Contractors, Samsung C&T, and John Holland — were still unable to identify how or where the gas was entering the tunnel.

ETU Secretary Justin Page said the union's concerns about worker safety were amplified by the ongoing failure to identify the source of the gas.

"Gas leaks are particularly dangerous in tunnels due to reduced airflow, potentially causing explosions or putting workers at risk of asphyxiation," Mr Page said.

"For the third times in less than a week, hundreds of workers have been forced to evacuate this same section of tunnel after smelling gas, yet management appears no closer to identifying how this gas is getting into the tunnel.

"In a tunnel, a lack of ventilation could allow even a slow gas leak to build up to dangerous levels, putting the lives of our members at risk.

"Management have now agreed to put in place 24-hour air monitoring in one section of the tunnel, along with portable gas detection devices that are being carried by a small number of workers, but we are concerned that this doesn't go far enough to ensure gas leaks are immediately identified.

"We are also concerned by the failure of management to notify the safety regulator, SafeWork NSW, each time gas is detected in the tunnel, as they are required to under health and safety legislation.

"There also appears to be ongoing confusion regarding the correct evacuation procedures, with workers receiving contradictory information from managers regarding whether there was an evacuation in place for their section of the tunnel."

Find attached photos of workers evacuating and Fire and Rescue NSW units in attendance at the tunnel this morning.

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