

All's not fair under Baird's acquisition test

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Illustration: Alan Moir

The failure of Mike Baird to pay heed to proper procedures around the acquisition of homes for the WestConnex project illustrates his determination to carry out his costly and contentious agenda even if it means transgressing due process and fairness ("Premier fiddled while homes were bulldozed", August 24).

It is time for Baird and his government to start treating affected communities with respect and empathy. This is a democracy not a dictatorship.

Alan Morris Eastlakes

Compulsory acquisition of homes for infrastructure projects is being abused by the private investors who will make hundreds of millions from these projects over the next 20 or 30 years. It is all very well for governments to make a law that properties needed for essential public works must be surrendered at some figure determined by the Valuer General.

The original principle behind this was that the government needs the property and it is the government that will develop it for the public good (even so, such properties should be acquired on a fair market basis). But when the project is a public/private partnership that will deliver enormous profits to the partner, then it is immoral that those investors should be protected by law from having to negotiate a full and generous price for the homes they need to take.

Why should the private investment companies behind WestConnex be entitled (by law!!!) to a better deal than any other property developers when acquiring property from home owners?

Graeme Smith Randwick