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THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN

BREAKING NEWS

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M4 protest shuts down Sydney roads

May 23, 2004

A COMMUNITY protest against a proposed motorway extension shut down several major roads in Sydney's inner west today.

The rally was organised by a coalition of groups opposed to the planned M4 East, which would connect the M4 Motorway at North Strathfield with Parramatta Road and the City West Link at Haberfield.

The demonstration began at 11am (AEST) and closed Wattle Street, Dobroyd Parade and the City West Link at Haberfield.

Protesters also affected traffic as they headed for Pioneer Park in Norton Street, Leichhardt.

Mary-Jane Gleeson, from advocacy group EcoTransit Sydney, organised the rally with support from Leichhardt and Ashfield councils.

She said up to 1,500 people had attended to protest against the proposed development.

"Residents are protesting RTA proposals to widen the existing M4 Motorway by 150 per cent and extend it through the inner western suburbs," Ms Gleeson said.

"We're seriously concerned that it will add further congestion and pollution to this area and the wider western suburbs."

Ms Gleeson said previous experience showed that whenever a

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new motorway was built "it just adds more than 20 per cent to the traffic within the first year – people are attracted to using them so it doesn't fix the problem".

"We want to see safe public transport solutions built into the government's thinking, we want them to think about that first and foremost before they consider what roads they put in place," she said.

Greens MLC Lee Rhiannon, who addressed the demonstration, agreed that the NSW government needed to offer more public transport solutions.

"Motorways aren't working, we need another way," she said.