

Mr Mookhey, Mr Banasiak, Ms Boyd,
Mr Farraway, Mr Kahn, Mr Mallard and Ms Moriarty,
Committee Members

Inquiry into the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link Project

Public Works Committee

Legislative Council

NSW Parliament

Macquarie Street

SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Mookhey, Mr Banasiak, Ms Boyd, Mr Farraway, Mr Kahn, Mr Mallard and Ms Moriarty,

RE: SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE WESTERN HARBOUR TUNNEL & BEACHES LINK PROJECT

Thank you for conducting this important inquiry, a much needed effort to gain greater transparency and better outcomes for those affected by these Projects.

We are glad to see a diverse membership of the committee and hope this inquiry is a truly collaborative exercise and not a theatre of partisan politics.

We are concerned parents of a children attending Anzac Park Public School, a Government created state of the art educational institution where there are rooms with large always open windows and fans creating passive environmentally friendly heating/cooling but leaving the School extremely sensitive to external air and noise pollution. There is also a 5 storey unroofed atrium within the School building which adds to the exposure to external elements.

Up until now these Projects have been potential future adverse events with many of us objecting at all possible times through official channels, our members of parliament and the media. They are now very real with the early works presently causing adverse impacts on before and after school for us parents and 24/7 for the local community.

Whilst we object to these Projects and ideally they do not progress with the Government proceeding with better options, we are realistic and realise the Government is moving ahead so it is now critical to get the best outcomes and reduce adverse impacts. Being parents not in occupations that would mean we would be able to provide a lot of technical responses to the Terms of Reference, our responses outline our concerns and issues with these Projects

(a) *the adequacy of the business case for the project, including the cost benefits ratio-*

As there has been no disclosure to the general public of the 'business case' for the Projects it is hard to comment on whether it is adequate or not. Likewise there has been no business cases for alternative options disclosed to the general public. If there had been disclosure we could see the benefits and liabilities of all the options and be in a position to have consultations with the decision makers and comment. Therefore there has been a total lack of transparency, disclosure and consultation on the business cost aspects of the Projects

(and other options). As such unfortunately we are unable to comment on the question of adequacy.

(b) *the adequacy of the consideration of alternative options-*

The Projects main documentation, that is the EIS, and, in the case of the Western Harbour Tunnel Project, the Approval documentation, there is little included in relation to alternative options.

There are oblique references to the somewhat half-hearted inclusion of public transport as an afterthought when there should have been a detailed analysis and costing of a public transport option.

Further, for the Beaches Link no other options eg diverting traffic through Chatswood rather than across the Harbour were not detailed in the EIS documentation.

All of these other options were made known to Transport for NSW and the Planning Department early on in the investigation process but not considered and a case for/against provided or required to be considered by those authorities.

(c) *the cost of the project, including the reasons for overruns-*

The estimated cost as disclosed so far is massive, and we have not seen in any documents where it has been stated how the Projects are going to be funded.

As the alleged benefits of the Projects are estimated in 'minutes' being saved (with no reference to what has happened in all the other motorway/tunnel projects, that is the benefits last a very short time and the congestion they hoped to alleviate is then occurring in the motorways/tunnels constructed to remove it) then it is hard to justify the massive cost. Further, that does not allow for the ongoing cost to everyone's health and wellbeing arising from the adverse impacts of the construction and operation of the Projects.

Given the huge overruns and additional costs in previous major infrastructure projects, notwithstanding what may be said in documentation about overruns and related cost, there will be massive additional costs incurred after they start to get them to completion. The drain on the community from the initial cost and subsequent likely additional costs is another reason to not progress the Projects.

(d) *the consideration of the governance and structure of the project including the use of a development partner model-*

As with the business case, the consideration of other options and cost, there is little to nil disclosed as to the governance and structure of the Projects nor the use of development partners (we assume you are referring to the Government co-opting others to either assist with the financing or way the Projects are delivered) so it is hard for us to be able to comment on those aspects.

The provision of information in clear, concise and easily digestible terms for this and other aspects would be greatly appreciated and assist in assessing whether the Projects are really any good.

(e) *the extent to which the project is meeting the original goals of the project*

We believe the express goal was originally to substantially improve the flow of traffic across the Harbour. We would suggest that tied into that goal were additional goals to improve local traffic in North Sydney, Inner West and Northern Beaches local areas and not adversely affect those areas (with air and noise pollution) when implementing those Projects.

The Projects now indicate 'minutes' improvements only with no accounting for expected return of congestion after a short period of operational use (as has been the case in every other major road infrastructure project in metropolitan Sydney).

The implementation of the Projects will cause massive congestion to local traffic in all the areas we list and create numerous rabbit runs further adversely affecting the flow of local traffic.

During construction and in operation the Projects in their current form adversely affect the communities in the local areas with substantial health risks for both noise and air quality.

So in response the Projects are not meeting their original goals.

(f) *the consultation methods and effectiveness, both with affected communities and stakeholders*

Up until recently, consultation consisted of Transport for NSW representatives attending meetings telling the community what they were doing, not answering questions and not altering their position even in the light of widespread opposition. The local community were not heard and felt dejected with no possible recourse against the juggernaut that was and is Transport for NSW.

So up until recently, consultation as the lay person would define it never happened and the exercise purely facilitated the Transport for NSW's ability to tick a box and move forward with plans unaltered.

Whether there has been a change to that version of 'consultation' we must wait and see but there are signs of change for the moment as Transport for NSW did engage with our Principal and P & C Association in relation to safety issues affecting their use of local roads near the School. It is early days, one hopes it is a permanent change but as we said time will tell.

(g) *the extent to which changes in population growth, work and travel patterns due to the Covid-19 pandemic have impacted on the original cost benefit ratio*

The COVID pandemic has created a shift in the way the community conducts their lives, particularly where we work with many people now working from home.

Also the pandemic has reduced immigration and travel to this country to nil, which will take years to recover to pre-pandemic levels if it ever does.

We assume (noting the Government has not provided the cost benefit ratio to the public) the cost benefit ratio is based on pre-pandemic work, immigration and travel arrangements which would have involved far greater levels of travel by the community, which in turn would have added to the positive side of the ratio (the time saved by all those people in travelling through the new tunnels) adding to a total which justified the Projects.

As things have changed dramatically and we would argue permanently the Government needs to redo the cost benefit ratio calculations taking these changes into account and we then see if it is still a positive go forward scenario.

- (h) *whether the NSW Government should publish the base case financial model and the benefit cost ratio for the project and its component parts*

Yes the Government is spending \$15billion plus of our dollars so we have a right to see the justification for the Projects.

- (i) *whether the project is subject to the appropriate levels of transparency and accountability that would be expected of a project delivered by a public sector body*

The Projects are not subject to any levels of transparency or accountability close to what should apply to such huge state infrastructure projects with such major financial and human cost involved.

It is entirely inappropriate for the public to hear snippets of information via news reports or the mining of reams of obscure papers issued by Government to try and glean bits of information which might when combined provide something approaching what we should be told and know about the Projects.

The Government needed to be transparent and accountable in that they need to provide clear concise digestible information about the Projects before committing to them so the public can determine if the Projects are an appropriate and good way to spend the public's money.

- (j) *the impact on the environment including marine ecosystems*

As the Government is taking a short cut in those parts of the Projects where the tunnels cross water with the tunnels not being constructed under the harbour bed but rather sitting on the harbour bed, the impact on the health and wellbeing of marine ecosystems in the harbour is hugely adverse and permanent.

Marine ecosystems will be adversely disturbed and years of toxic material that has settled on the harbour floor will be then mixed through the harbour waters creating environmental havoc to the harbour areas from which there will be no recovery.

- (k) *the adequacy of the processes of accessing and responding to noise, vibration and other impacts on residents, during construction and operationally*

With respect to construction aside from sensitive stakeholders, like Anzac Park School, where there has been some concessions in early works for the freeway upgrade in relation to safety issues, the processes have largely been on the basis, this is what Transport for NSW are doing, its going to make noise and vibrations potentially at all times of the day and night, so get used to it. We understand there has been some attempts to reduce impacts eg double glazing and alternate accommodation, but the strict manner in which that has been processed has meant people miss out or need to pursue a reasonable outcome because they missed out due to the back and white interpretation of the option provided by transport for NSW.

These issues are arising at the initial stages so it does not bode well for the adversely affected public going forward with the construction process.

The School has been seeking EPA approved air quality monitors be installed now in the School grounds to have base line information ahead of the major air quality issues coming with the works across the freeway at the Cammeray Golf Course site so it can be properly assessed whether the School is adversely affected by pollution from that site. Discussion has been deferred which is unhelpful plus it would appear Transport for NSW will want to monitor near the Golf Course site not the School which is contrary to what the School needs to get a real figure for the adverse health impact on the School population.

Operationally the major issue for processes to deal with impacts on residents (including our school children here) is the failure to have the pollution stacks situated about 250 metres from the School filtered to reduce the release of emissions and other toxins coming from vehicles using the tunnels. The Government is relying on old, out of date reports which are also qualified and based on certain events occurring which are not guaranteed as well as comparing a 15 km 6 lane triple one mid location tunnel servicing up to 4.3 million cross harbour trips a week and a population of 5 million with a city 1/5 that size, with 75% of new car sales being electric vehicles and pollution stacks every less than 5 km. This process is therefore totally inadequate and needs to be revisited prior to any final decision is made on the installation of filtration systems to the pollution stacks.

Given the way the School at Anzac Park has been built processes should include consideration for that building, which ultimately if the risk of pollution impacts are not removed may require the retro fit of air conditioning and filters at the top of the atrium along with any other relevant action to reduce the impact of pollution on the children both during construction and in operation.

- (l) *the impact of the project on nearby public sites, including Yurulbin Point and Dawn Fraser Baths*

Public and First Nation Sites need to be preserved at all costs, we do not feel this has been done and Transport for NSW needs to revisit the plans relating to those places and ensure they are not adversely impacted by the Projects.

(m) *any other related matter*

1.The School needs EPA monitors installed on its site as soon as possible to gain base level figures to then be able to legitimately argue Transport for NSW needs to fix increased pollution during construction and in operation which arises from increases in pollution data post installation and commencement of construction and/or operation.

2.At some point the 'no brainer' argument must be considered critical in the decision making processes for the Projects. We are referring to the filtration of the pollution stacks. The dodgy science the Government seeks to rely on to not filter indicates the massive pollution only increase the already dangerous pollution levels a little bit and most is dispersed higher in the atmosphere not affecting those nearby. We say that conclusion is strongly disputed but even if you put that argument to one side there is still massive pollution belching into the atmosphere directly affecting everyone and adversely increasing climate change and filtration will remove a great portion of that pollution saving the climate and environment from pollution and greatly assisting in reducing the adverse impact for the benefit of our children. We think that is a 'no brainer' but to date that has been lost on Transport for NSW and the Department of Planning. If one were cynical the loss may be due to a need to keep the Tunnels ongoing maintenance costs down for resale purposes so they can fund the next 'what's good for you' project the Government decides the public just needs to have to be happy and prosperous.

Thank you for reading our comments and we look forward to hearing your deliberations and decisions on the Projects.

We do not wish our personal details be disclosed in the course of your inquiry.

Kind regards

Mr Mookhey, Mr Banasiak, Ms Boyd,
Mr Farraway, Mr Kahn, Mr Mallard and Ms Moriarty,
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Inquiry into the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link Project
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SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Mookhey, Mr Banasiak, Ms Boyd,
Mr Farraway, Mr Kahn, Mr Mallard and Ms Moriarty,

RE: SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE WESTERN HARBOUR TUNNEL &
BEACHES LINK PROJECTS

Thank you for conducting this important inquiry, a much needed effort to gain greater transparency and better outcomes for those affected by these Projects.

We are glad to see a diverse membership of the committee and hope this inquiry is a truly collaborative exercise and not a theatre of partisan politics.

We are concerned parents of a child attending Anzac Park Public School and another who will start kindergarten in 2023. Anzac Park Public School is a Government created state of the art educational institution where there are rooms with large always open windows and fans creating passive environmentally friendly heating and cooling, which unfortunately will make the School vulnerable to external air and noise pollution.

We also live nearby at the bottom of the Cammeray Golf Course, and work in North Sydney and St Leonards respectively, using public transport and walking to work and school. We will be greatly impacted in our home and working life by the works during the years of Project build and the resulting traffic issues in our local roads from these Projects when done.

Many of us in the community have been objecting to this Projects every way possible through official channels, our members of parliament and the media. Now that the early works in preparation for these Projects have started, it is now very real and already causing adverse impacts on before and after school for us parents and 24/7 disruption for the residents living near the early works sites.

We object to these Projects and hope they do not progress, and that the Government proceeds with better options. But we are realistic and realise the Government is moving ahead. so it is critical to get the best outcomes and reduce adverse impacts of these Projects. We are not trained to be able to provide a lot of technical responses to the Terms of Reference, so our responses outline our concerns and issues with these Projects as residents, workers and parents in this community.

Our concerns are as follows:

- (a) the adequacy of a business case for either of the Projects, including impacts and benefits

As there has been no disclosure to the general public of the 'business case' for the Projects it is hard to comment on whether it is adequate or not. There have also been no business cases for

alternative options disclosed to the general public. If there had been disclosure we could see the benefits and liabilities of all the options and be in a position to have consultations with the decision makers and comment. There has been a total lack of transparency, disclosure and consultation on the business cost aspects of the Projects (and other options). As such unfortunately we are unable to comment on the question of adequacy.

(b) the adequacy of the consideration of alternative options

The Projects 'main documentation has been the EIS, a large meandering document of over a thousand pages long for each Project. For the Western Harbour Tunnel Project, there has now also been the Approval documentation. There is little reference in any of these documents in relation to alternative options considered.

There should have been a detailed analysis and costing of a public transport option. And for the Beaches Link no other options, eg diverting traffic through Chatswood rather than across the Harbour, were detailed in the EIS documentation. Many options were made known to Transport for NSW and the Planning Department early on in the investigation process, but do not seem to have been considered and a case for/against provided or required to be considered by those authorities.

(c) the costs of the project

The estimated cost as disclosed so far seems extremely large, and we have not seen in any documents where it has been stated how the Projects are going to be funded.

The alleged benefits of the Projects are estimated in 'minutes' being saved, so it is hard to justify the massive cost. There is also no reference to what has happened in the other motorway/tunnel projects, that the benefits last a very short time and the congestion hoped to be alleviated is now also occurring in the motorways/tunnels constructed to remove it. There will also be an ongoing cost to everyone's health and wellbeing arising from the adverse air and noise pollution impacts of the construction and operation of the Projects, that seems to be downplayed in the documentation.

(d) the consideration of the governance and structure of the project, including the use of a development partner model

We assume that development partners refers to the Government co-opting others to either assist with the financing or way the Projects are delivered. Like the business case and consideration of other options and cost, there has been little to nothing disclosed about the governance and structure of these Projects nor the use of development partners. Therefore it is hard for us to be able to comment on those aspects.

The provision of information in clear, concise and easily digestible terms for this and other aspects would be greatly appreciated and assist in assessing whether these Projects have really any value.

(e) the extent to which the project is meeting the original goals of the project

We believe the express goal was originally to substantially improve the flow of traffic across the Harbour. We would suggest that tied into that goal were additional goals to improve local traffic in North Sydney, Inner West and Northern Beaches local areas and not adversely affect those areas (with air and noise pollution) when implementing those Projects.

The Projects now indicate 'minutes' improvements only with no accounting for expected return of congestion after a short period of operational use (as has been the case in every other major road infrastructure project in metropolitan Sydney as referred to above).

The implementation of the Projects will cause massive congestion to local traffic in all the areas we list and create numerous rabbit runs further adversely affecting the flow of local traffic. During construction and in operation the Projects in their current form adversely affect the communities in the local areas with substantial health risks for both noise and air quality.

So in response the Projects are not meeting their original goals.

(f) the consultation methods and effectiveness, both with affected communities and stakeholders

Up until recently, consultation consisted of Transport for NSW representatives attending meetings telling the community what they were doing, not answering questions and not altering their position even in the light of widespread opposition. These have often been attended by junior employees who can only hand out materials.

The periods of time for the community to make submissions in response to each of the respective EIS documents were short, and the Beaches Link EIS period was 6 weeks ending in March 2020 during a time of chaos when a pandemic had started and home, work and school life was in disarray. Despite all of this, people made more than 10,000 submissions, majority objections, during both the WHT and the Beaches Link EIS processes. But these objections were ignored and the Projects confirmed to proceed.

The local community were not heard and feel dejected with no possible recourse against the juggernaut that is Transport for NSW. So up until recently consultation, as a lay person would define, never happened and the consultation activities purely facilitated the Transport for NSW's ability to tick a box and move forward with plans.

Whether there has been a change to that version of 'consultation' we must wait and see. We feel hopeful with signs of change as Transport for NSW did engage with our Anzac Park Public School Principal and P & C Association in relation to safety issues affecting their use of local roads near the School during the early works currently underway.

(g) the extent to which changes in population growth, work and travel patterns due to the Covid-19 pandemic have impacted on the original cost benefit ratio

The COVID pandemic has created a shift in the way the community conducts their lives, particularly where we work with many people now working from home. Also the pandemic has reduced immigration and travel to this country to nil, which will take years to recover to pre-pandemic levels.

We assume (noting the Government has not provided the cost benefit ratio to the public) the cost benefit ratio remains based on pre-pandemic work, immigration and travel arrangements which would have involved far greater levels of travel by the community adding to the positive side of the ratio (the time saved by all those people in travelling through the new tunnels) and resulting in a total cost benefit ratio which justified the Projects.

As things have changed dramatically and we would argue permanently, the Government needs to redo the cost benefit ratio calculations taking these changes into account and see if it is still a positive go forward scenario.

(h) whether the NSW Government should publish the base case financial model and the benefit cost ratio for the project and its component parts

Yes, the Government is spending \$15billion plus of our dollars so we have a right to see the justification for the Projects.

(i) whether the project is subject to the appropriate levels of transparency and accountability that would be expected of a project delivered by a public sector body

The Projects are not subject to the levels of transparency or accountability that should apply to such huge state infrastructure projects with such major financial and human cost involved.

It is inappropriate for the public to hear snippets of information via news reports or having to mine reams of obscure papers issued by Government to try and glean bits of information which might all together add up to what we should be told and know about these Projects.

The Government needed to be transparent and accountable in that they need to provide clear concise digestible information about the Projects before committing to them so the public can determine if the Projects are an appropriate and good way to spend the public's money.

(j) the impact on the environment including marine ecosystems

As the Government has elected to constructed the tunnels to sit on the harbour bed rather than under the harbour bed, the impact on the health and wellbeing of marine ecosystems in the harbour is hugely adverse and permanent.

Marine ecosystems will be adversely disturbed and years of toxic material that has settled on the harbour floor will be then mixed through the harbour waters creating environmental havoc to the harbour areas from which there will be no recovery.

(k) the adequacy of the processes of accessing and responding to noise, vibration and other impacts on residents, during construction and operationally

There have been some concessions in early works for the freeway upgrade in relation to safety issues for sensitive stakeholders, like Anzac Park School. Otherwise thought, the processes have largely been on the basis that this is what Transport for NSW is doing, it will make noise and vibrations potentially at all times of the day and night, so get used to it. We understand there have been some attempts to reduce impacts for some residents, eg double glazing and alternate accommodation, but the strict manner in which that has been processed has meant people miss out or need to pursue a reasonable outcome because they missed out due to the back and white interpretation of the option provided by Transport for NSW. People who are in rented accommodation are especially vulnerable to compromised living conditions during these works.

These issues are arising at the initial stages so it does not bode well for the adversely affected public going forward with the construction process.

The School has been seeking EPA approved air quality monitors be installed now in the School grounds to have base line information ahead of the major air quality changes coming with the

works across the freeway at the Cammeray Golf Course site, so it can be properly assessed whether the School is adversely affected by pollution from that site. Discussion on this has been deferred, and latest position appears that Transport for NSW wants to monitor near the Golf Course site not the School. This is contrary to what the School needs to get a real figure for the adverse health impact on the School population.

Operationally the major issue for processes to deal with impacts on residents (including our school children) is the failure to have the pollution stacks situated about 250 metres from the School filtered to reduce the release of emissions and other toxins coming from vehicles using the tunnels. The Government is relying on old, out of date reports which are also qualified and based on certain events occurring which are not guaranteed, as well as comparing a 15 km 6 lane triple one mid location tunnel servicing up to 4.3 million cross harbour trips a week and a population of 5 million with a city 1/5 that size, with 75% of new car sales being electric vehicles and pollution stacks every less than 5 km. This process is totally inadequate and needs to be revisited prior to any final decision made on the installation of filtration systems to the pollution stacks.

Given the way the School at Anzac Park has been built by NSW Education Department, processes should include consideration for that building. Ultimately if the risk of pollution impacts are not removed, this may require the retro fit of air conditioning and filters at the top of the building atrium and any other relevant action to reduce the impact of pollution on the children both during construction and in operation.

(l) the impact of the project on nearby public sites, including Yurulbin Point and Dawn Fraser Baths

Public and First Nation Sites need to be preserved at all costs. We do not feel this has been done and Transport for NSW needs to revisit the plans relating to those places and ensure they are not adversely impacted by the Projects.

(m) any other related matter

1. The School needs EPA monitors installed on its site as soon as possible to gain base level figures to then be able to legitimately argue Transport for NSW needs to fix increased pollution during construction and in operation which arises from increases in pollution data post installation and commencement of construction and/or operation.

2. At some point the 'no brainer' argument for filtration of the pollution stacks must be considered critical in the decision making processes for the Projects. The questionable science the Government seeks to rely on to not filter indicates the massive pollution only increase the already dangerous pollution levels a little bit and most is dispersed higher in the atmosphere not affecting those nearby. We say that conclusion is strongly disputed, but even if you put that argument to one side there is still massive pollution belching into the atmosphere directly affecting everyone and adversely increasing climate change and filtration will remove a great portion of that pollution saving the climate and environment from pollution and greatly assisting in reducing the adverse impact for the benefit of our children.

We think this is a 'no brainer', but to date that has been lost on Transport for NSW and the Department of Planning. Is this due to a need to keep the 'Tunnels' ongoing maintenance costs down for resale purposes, so the Government can fund future projects in the same way without due public consultation?

Thank you for reading our comments and we look forward to hearing your deliberations and decisions on the Projects. We do not wish our personal details be disclosed in the course of your inquiry.

Kind regards,

Mr Mookhey, Mr Banasiak, Ms Boyd,

Mr Farraway, Mr Kahn, Mr Mallard and Ms Moriarty,

Committee Members

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RE: SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE WESTERN HARBOUR TUNNEL & BEACHES LINK PROJECT

Thank you for conducting this important inquiry.

I am a concerned parent of a child attending Anzac Park Public School, a Government created state of the art educational institution where there are rooms with large always open windows and fans creating passive environmentally friendly heating/cooling but leaving the School extremely sensitive to external air and noise pollution. There is also a 5 storey unroofed atrium within the School building which adds to the exposure to external elements.

These Projects are now very real with the early works presently causing adverse impacts on before and after school for parents & schoolchildren, and 24/7 for the local community.

Whilst we object to these Projects and ideally they do not progress with the Government proceeding with better options, we are realistic and realise the Government is moving ahead so it is now critical to get the best outcomes and reduce adverse impacts.

These Projects have a very negative personal impact for me and my family and also on all our friends in the local community.

Not having a technical or science background my comments are my take on what these Projects are about, their adverse impact and the need for a better outcome.

(a) *the adequacy of the business case for the project, including the cost benefits ratio-*

As there has been no disclosure to the general public of the 'business case' for the Projects it is hard to comment on whether it is adequate or not. Likewise there has been no business cases for alternative options disclosed to the general public.

If there had been disclosure we could see the benefits and liabilities of all the options and be in a position to have consultations with the decision makers and comment.

If one looks at the documentation created for these Projects by Transport for NSW and DPIE, they are massive but they miss things and bury negative aspects. With that in mind I would

anticipate the business case if there is one, would also not include the negative aspects and/or downplay them to artificially create a positive. However it would need to be published for the public to see what is really the case.

Therefore there has been a total lack of transparency, disclosure and consultation on the business cost aspects of the Projects (and other options). As such unfortunately we are unable to comment on the question of adequacy.

(b) *the adequacy of the consideration of alternative options-*

The Projects main documentation, that is the EIS, and, in the case of the Western Harbour Tunnel Project, the Approval documentation, there is little included in relation to alternative options.

There are oblique references to the somewhat half-hearted inclusion of public transport as an afterthought when there should have been a detailed analysis and costing of a public transport option.

Further, for the Beaches Link no other options eg diverting traffic through Chatswood rather than across the Harbour were not detailed in the EIS documentation.

All of these other options were made known to Transport for NSW and the Planning Department early on in the investigation process but not considered and a case for/against provided or required to be considered by those authorities.

Therefore the consideration of other options has been grossly inadequate, the documentation is geared to a particular outcome without including real assessments of other options.

(c) *the cost of the project, including the reasons for overruns-*

The estimated cost as disclosed so far is massive, and we have not seen in any documents where it has been stated how the Projects are going to be funded.

As the alleged benefits of the Projects are estimated in 'minutes' being saved (with no reference to what has happened in all the other motorway/tunnel projects, that is the benefits last a very short time and the congestion they hoped to alleviate is then occurring in the motorways/tunnels constructed to remove it) then it is hard to justify the massive cost. Further, that does not allow for the ongoing cost to everyone's health and wellbeing arising from the adverse impacts of the construction and operation of the Projects.

Given the huge overruns and additional costs in previous major infrastructure projects, notwithstanding what may be said in documentation about overruns and related cost, there will be massive additional costs incurred after they start to get them to completion. The drain on the community from the initial cost and subsequent likely additional costs is another reason to not progress the Projects.

(d) *the consideration of the governance and structure of the project including the use of a development partner model-*

As with the business case, the consideration of other options and cost, there is little to nil disclosed as to the governance and structure of the Projects nor the use of development partners (we assume you are referring to the Government co-opting others to either assist with the financing or way the Projects are delivered) so it is hard for us to be able to comment on those aspects.

The provision of information in clear, concise and easily digestible terms for this and other aspects would be greatly appreciated and assist in assessing whether the Projects are really any good.

(e) *the extent to which the project is meeting the original goals of the project*

We believe the express goal was originally to substantially improve the flow of traffic across the Harbour. We would suggest that tied into that goal were additional goals to improve local traffic in North Sydney, Inner West and Northern Beaches local areas and not adversely affect those areas (with air and noise pollution) when implementing those Projects.

The Projects now indicate 'minutes' improvements only with no accounting for expected return of congestion after a short period of operational use (as has been the case in every other major road infrastructure project in metropolitan Sydney).

The implementation of the Projects will cause massive congestion to local traffic in all the areas we list and create numerous rabbit runs further adversely affecting the flow of local traffic.

During construction and in operation the Projects in their current form adversely affect the communities in the local areas with substantial health risks for both noise and air quality.

So in response the Projects are not meeting their original goals.

(f) *the consultation methods and effectiveness, both with affected communities and stakeholders*

Up until recently, consultation consisted of Transport for NSW representatives attending meetings telling the community what they were doing, not answering questions and not altering their position even in the light of widespread opposition. The local community were not heard and felt dejected with no possible recourse against the juggernaut that was and is Transport for NSW.

So up until recently, consultation as the lay person would define it never happened and the exercise purely facilitated the Transport for NSW's ability to tick a box and move forward with plans unaltered.

Whether there has been a change to that version of 'consultation' we must wait and see but there are signs of change for the moment as Transport for NSW did engage with our Principal and P & C Association in relation to safety issues affecting their use of local roads

near the School. It is early days, one hopes it is a permanent change but as we said time will tell.

- (g) *the extent to which changes in population growth, work and travel patterns due to the Covid-19 pandemic have impacted on the original cost benefit ratio*

The COVID pandemic has created a shift in the way the community conducts their lives, particularly where we work with many people now working from home.

Also the pandemic has reduced immigration and travel to this country to nil, which will take years to recover to pre-pandemic levels if it ever does.

We assume (noting the Government has not provided the cost benefit ratio to the public) the cost benefit ratio is based on pre-pandemic work, immigration and travel arrangements which would have involved far greater levels of travel by the community, which in turn would have added to the positive side of the ratio (the time saved by all those people in travelling through the new tunnels) adding to a total which justified the Projects.

As things have changed dramatically and we would argue permanently the Government needs to redo the cost benefit ratio calculations taking these changes into account and we then see if it is still a positive go forward scenario.

- (h) *whether the NSW Government should publish the base case financial model and the benefit cost ratio for the project and its component parts*

Yes the Government is spending \$15billion plus of our dollars so we have a right to see the justification for the Projects.

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The Projects are not subject to any levels of transparency or accountability close to what should apply to such huge state infrastructure projects with such major financial and human cost involved.

It is entirely inappropriate for the public to hear snippets of information via news reports or the mining of reams of obscure papers issued by Government to try and glean bits of information which might when combined provide something approaching what we should be told and know about the Projects.

The Government needed to be transparent and accountable in that they need to provide clear concise digestible information about the Projects before committing to them so the public can determine if the Projects are an appropriate and good way to spend the public's money.

(j) *the impact on the environment including marine ecosystems*

As the Government is taking a short cut in those parts of the Projects where the tunnels cross water with the tunnels not being constructed under the harbour bed but rather sitting on the harbour bed, the impact on the health and wellbeing of marine ecosystems in the harbour is hugely adverse and permanent.

Marine ecosystems will be adversely disturbed and years of toxic material that has settled on the harbour floor will be then mixed through the harbour waters creating environmental havoc to the harbour areas from which there will be no recovery.

On land, the proposed construction causes similar long term irreversible havoc to areas within the proposed paths of the Tunnels, areas with toxins sub surface, natural habitats with specific flora and fauna, First Nation's Peoples sites, and areas enjoyed by local communities, all of which will be massively adversely and permanently disturbed and altered by the construction and operation of these Projects, to the detriment to everyone.

The impact is hugely adverse.

(k) *the adequacy of the processes of accessing and responding to noise, vibration and other impacts on residents, during construction and operationally*

With respect to construction aside from sensitive stakeholders, like Anzac Park School, where there has been some concessions in early works for the freeway upgrade in relation to safety issues, the processes have largely been on the basis, this is what Transport for NSW are doing, its going to make noise and vibrations potentially at all times of the day and night, so get used to it. We understand there has been some attempts to reduce impacts eg double glazing and alternate accommodation, but the strict manner in which that has been processed has meant people miss out or need to pursue a reasonable outcome because they missed out due to the back and white interpretation of the option provided by transport for NSW.

These issues are arising at the initial stages so it does not bode well for the adversely affected public going forward with the construction process.

The School has been seeking EPA approved air quality monitors be installed now in the School grounds to have base line information ahead of the major air quality issues coming with the works across the freeway at the Cammeray Golf Course site so it can be properly assessed whether the School is adversely affected by pollution from that site. Discussion has been deferred which is unhelpful plus it would appear Transport for NSW will want to monitor near the Golf Course site not the School which is contrary to what the School needs to get a real figure for the adverse health impact on the School population.

Operationally the major issue for processes to deal with impacts on residents (including our school children here) is the failure to have the pollution stacks situated about 250 metres from the School filtered to reduce the release of emissions and other toxins coming from vehicles using the tunnels. The Government is relying on old, out of date reports which are also qualified and based on certain events occurring which are not guaranteed as well as comparing a 15 km 6 lane triple one mid location tunnel servicing up to 4.3 million cross harbour trips a week and a population of 5 million with a city 1/5 that size, with 75% of new

car sales being electric vehicles and pollution stacks every less than 5 km. This process is therefore totally inadequate and needs to be revisited prior to any final decision is made on the installation of filtration systems to the pollution stacks.

Given the way the School at Anzac Park has been built processes should include consideration for that building, which ultimately if the risk of pollution impacts are not removed may require the retro fit of air conditioning and filters at the top of the atrium< along with any other relevant action to reduce the impact of pollution on the children both during construction and in operation.

The processes are grossly inadequate based on the fact the information underpinning the Projects is poor in many critical areas or hidden in the bulk of the documentation and not referred to by those proposing and approving particular courses of action in the Projects.

(l) *the impact of the project on nearby public sites, including Yurulbin Point and Dawn Fraser Baths*

Public and First Nation Sites need to be preserved at all costs, I do not feel this has been done and Transport for NSW needs to revisit the plans relating to those places and ensure they are not adversely impacted by the Projects.

(m) *any other related matter*

1. The School needs EPA monitors installed on its site as soon as possible to gain base level figures to then be able to legitimately argue Transport for NSW needs to fix increased pollution during construction and in operation which arises from increases in pollution data post installation and commencement of construction and/or operation.
2. An earlier Legislative Council inquiry about tunnels (I think in 2018) recommended pollution stacks be filtered. This appears to have been ignored. This inquiry needs to pursue filtration and what can be done to require same for these Projects.
3. The Government thru Minister Constance has now pushed for changes to be made in relation to the financial and other assistance to be provided to consumers to promote the purchase of electric vehicles, clearly an acknowledgement the pollution from the internal combustion vehicles is a major health risk, and in reality until we all drive electric vehicles the pollution stacks should be filtered.
4. The dance farce between the relevant Federal and State Ministers (Taylor & Constance) about the need for the take up of electric vehicles needs to be resolved asap with positive assistance for people wanting to buy electric vehicles and reduce our carbon footprint.

How can the positive pursuit of assistance (subsidies etc) (positive-State) be reconciled with the view, change be market driven with electric vehicles being a luxury item (negative-Federal). Someone is out of step with real world current views.

5. With recent decisions in the UK and here in a federal court where it was decided motor vehicle pollution was determined a cause of death for a child (UK) and the

Government's has an obligation and duty of care to children when making decisions that impact on their (the children) health and wellbeing position both now and in the future (here), someone needs to remind politicians daily of these decisions/obligations until these Projects are changed and made safe for the health and wellbeing of our children.

6. At some point the 'no brainer' argument must be considered critical in the decision making processes for the Projects. We are referring to the filtration of the pollution stacks. The dodgy science the Government seeks to rely on to not filter indicates the massive pollution only increase the already dangerous pollution levels a little bit and most is dispersed higher in the atmosphere not affecting those nearby. We say that conclusion is strongly disputed but even if you put that argument to one side there is still massive pollution belching into the atmosphere directly affecting everyone and adversely increasing climate change and filtration will remove a great portion of that pollution saving the climate and environment from pollution and greatly assisting in reducing the adverse impact for the benefit of our children. I think that is a 'no brainer' but to date that has been lost on Transport for NSW and the Department of Planning. If one were cynical the loss may be due to a need to keep the Tunnels ongoing maintenance costs down for resale purposes so they can fund the next 'what's good for you' project the Government decides the public just needs to have to be happy and prosperous.

Thank you for reading our comments and we look forward to hearing your deliberations and decisions on the Projects.

We do not wish our personal details be disclosed in the course of your inquiry.

Kind regards

17 June 2021

Mr Mookhey, Mr Banasiak, Ms Boyd,

Mr Farraway, Mr Kahn, Mr Mallard and Ms Moriarty,

Committee Members

Inquiry into the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link Project

Public Works Committee

Legislative Council

NSW Parliament

Macquarie Street

SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Mookhey, Mr Banasiak, Ms Boyd,

Mr Farraway, Mr Kahn, Mr Mallard and Ms Moriarty,

RE: SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE WESTERN HARBOUR TUNNEL & BEACHES LINK PROJECT

Thank you for conducting this important inquiry, a much needed effort to gain greater transparency and better outcomes for those affected by these Projects.

We are glad to see a diverse membership of the committee and hope this inquiry is a truly collaborative exercise and not a theatre of partisan politics.

I am a concerned parent of a child attending Anzac Park Public School, a Government created state of the art educational institution where there are rooms with large, always-open windows and fans creating passive environmentally friendly heating/cooling but leaving the School extremely sensitive to external air and noise pollution. There is also a 5 storey unroofed atrium within the School building which adds to the exposure to external elements.

Up until now these Projects have been potential future adverse events with many of us objecting at all possible times through official channels, our members of parliament and the media. They are now very real with the early works presently causing adverse impacts on before and after school for us parents and 24/7 for the local community.

I note that, in the initial submission period (to which I made a submission), there was no public response to submissions, and from the website, there were over 1,000 submissions, with fewer than 20 in favour of the development proceeding. I noted that several of these 'in favour' submissions had been incorrectly labelled as supporting the project, and were in fact objections. This is a statistically overwhelming objection to the proposal to undertake this project; effectively 100% of submissions were objections. Nonetheless, it has been seen fit to proceed with the project, with no real reference to the vehement objections of the public, particularly those members of the public who stand to be most severely affected by the project – an extraordinary and quite disgraceful refusal to acknowledge public opinion.

Whilst we object to these Projects and ideally they do not progress with the Government proceeding with better options, we are realistic and realise the Government is moving ahead so it is now critical to get the best outcomes and reduce adverse impacts. Being parents not in occupations that would

mean we would be able to provide a lot of technical responses to the Terms of Reference, our responses outline our concerns and issues with these Projects

(a) *the adequacy of the business case for the project, including the cost benefits ratio-*

As there has been no disclosure to the general public of the 'business case' for the Projects it is hard to comment on whether it is adequate or not. Likewise there has been no business cases for alternative options disclosed to the general public. If there had been disclosure we could see the benefits and liabilities of all the options and be in a position to have consultations with the decision makers and comment. Therefore there has been a total lack of transparency, disclosure and consultation on the business cost aspects of the Projects (and other options). As such unfortunately we are unable to comment on the question of adequacy.

(b) *the adequacy of the consideration of alternative options-*

The Projects main documentation, that is the EIS, and, in the case of the Western Harbour Tunnel Project, the Approval documentation, there is little included in relation to alternative options.

There are oblique references to the somewhat half-hearted inclusion of public transport as an afterthought when there should have been a detailed analysis and costing of a public transport option.

Further, for the Beaches Link no other options eg diverting traffic through Chatswood rather than across the Harbour were not detailed in the EIS documentation.

All of these other options were made known to Transport for NSW and the Planning Department early on in the investigation process but not considered and a case for/against provided or required to be considered by those authorities.

(c) *the cost of the project, including the reasons for overruns-*

The estimated cost as disclosed so far is massive, and we have not seen in any documents where it has been stated how the Projects are going to be funded.

As the alleged benefits of the Projects are estimated in 'minutes' being saved (with no reference to what has happened in all the other motorway/tunnel projects, that is the benefits last a very short time and the congestion they hoped to alleviate is then occurring in the motorways/tunnels constructed to remove it) then it is hard to justify the massive cost. Further, that does not allow for the ongoing cost to everyone's health and wellbeing arising from the adverse impacts of the construction and operation of the Projects.

Given the huge overruns and additional costs in previous major infrastructure projects, notwithstanding what may be said in documentation about overruns and related cost, there will be massive additional costs incurred after they start to get them to completion. The drain on the community from the initial cost and subsequent likely additional costs is another reason to not progress the Projects.

(d) *the consideration of the governance and structure of the project including the use of a development partner model-*

As with the business case, the consideration of other options and cost, there is little to nil disclosed as to the governance and structure of the Projects nor the use of development partners (we assume you are referring to the Government co-opting others to either assist with the financing or way the Projects are delivered) so it is hard for us to be able to comment on those aspects.

The provision of information in clear, concise and easily digestible terms for this and other aspects would be greatly appreciated and assist in assessing whether the Projects are really any good.

(e) *the extent to which the project is meeting the original goals of the project*

We believe the express goal was originally to substantially improve the flow of traffic across the Harbour. We would suggest that tied into that goal were additional goals to improve local traffic in North Sydney, Inner West and Northern Beaches local areas and not adversely affect those areas (with air and noise pollution) when implementing those Projects.

The Projects now indicate 'minutes' improvements only with no accounting for expected return of congestion after a short period of operational use (as has been the case in every other major road infrastructure project in metropolitan Sydney).

The implementation of the Projects will cause massive congestion to local traffic in all the areas we list and create numerous rabbit runs further adversely affecting the flow of local traffic.

During construction and in operation the Projects in their current form adversely affect the communities in the local areas with substantial health risks for both noise and air quality.

So in response the Projects are not meeting their original goals.

(f) *the consultation methods and effectiveness, both with affected communities and stakeholders*

Up until recently, consultation consisted of Transport for NSW representatives attending meetings telling the community what they were doing, not answering questions and not altering their position even in the light of widespread opposition. The local community were not heard and felt dejected with no possible recourse against the juggernaut that was and is Transport for NSW.

So up until recently, consultation as the lay person would define it never happened and the exercise purely facilitated the Transport for NSW's ability to tick a box and move forward with plans unaltered.

Whether there has been a change to that version of 'consultation' we must wait and see but there are signs of change for the moment as Transport for NSW did engage with our Principal and P & C Association in relation to safety issues affecting their use of local roads near the School. It is early days, one hopes it is a permanent change but as we said time will tell.

- (g) *the extent to which changes in population growth, work and travel patterns due to the Covid-19 pandemic have impacted on the original cost benefit ratio*

The COVID pandemic has created a shift in the way the community conducts their lives, particularly where we work with many people now working from home.

Also the pandemic has reduced immigration and travel to this country to nil, which will take years to recover to pre-pandemic levels if it ever does.

We assume (noting the Government has not provided the cost benefit ratio to the public) the cost benefit ratio is based on pre-pandemic work, immigration and travel arrangements which would have involved far greater levels of travel by the community, which in turn would have added to the positive side of the ratio (the time saved by all those people in travelling through the new tunnels) adding to a total which justified the Projects.

As things have changed dramatically and we would argue permanently the Government needs to redo the cost benefit ratio calculations taking these changes into account and we then see if it is still a positive go forward scenario.

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Thank you for reading these comments and we look forward to hearing your deliberations and decisions on the Projects.

Yours sincerely,

Innes Ireland (North Sydney resident and father of a child at Anzac Park Public School)