

## **Inquiry into the Impact of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link**

**Hearing 27 September 2021**

### **Supplementary questions**

1. The community have raised concerns that the stated travel time savings are not plausible - what validation of the claimed travel time savings have been completed?

The validation of the traffic time savings is a matter for Transport for NSW.

The Department's assessment relies on modelling, which has been peer reviewed by the Department's independent traffic consultant. In addition, for the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade project, TfNSW is required to:

- Prepare a **Road Network Performance Plan** to review the predicted localised traffic impacts as a result of the project and to implement mitigation measures to manage impacts.
- Undertake **Operational Road Network Performance Reviews at 12 months and at five years** to confirm the operational traffic impacts of the project on surrounding arterial roads and whether the mitigation measures identified in the Road Network Performance Plan are adequate.

- a. Has validation of these times been provided to DPIE, given a bulk of the financial benefits of the project are travel times?

See above response.

2. Do you acknowledge that taking regular commuters off the road and supporting work from home/ local work centres opens up roads for freight and other trips that reduce the need for additional road capacity?

This is a matter for Transport for NSW as the primary agency in determining the transport and related capacity needs for NSW.

3. Two way tolling has been earmarked and confirmed by Transport for NSW for all Harbour Crossings - what modelling has been done to predict the inevitable toll avoidance by workers who avoid the Beaches Link and WestConnex due to prohibitive toll costs?

The traffic assessment and associated modelling included the consideration of toll avoidance.

4. Why have you accepted the assertion that public transport alternatives are not possible to the Northern Beaches when a corridor assessment in 2019 demonstrated that a Metro would be possible?

This is a matter for Transport for NSW as the primary agency in determining the transport needs for the Northern Beaches.

5. Do you require Transport for NSW to address the Preferred Infrastructure Request for the Beaches Link with site alternatives anywhere on the tip and the completion of new

traffic studies, or will you deem that more information on the current alignment is acceptable?

The request for a Preferred Infrastructure Report required Transport for NSW to provide further advice on the selection of the Flat Rock Gully construction support site and information on local traffic impacts. The Department will review this information in its assessment of the proposal.

6. Can you explain why Jacobs who developed the bulk of the EIS and was subsequently awarded the contract as part of Sydney Program Alliance is now permitted to do the testing on identified sites of interest where contamination is a moderate to high risk?

This question should be directed to Transport for NSW which is responsible for these contracts.

7. Did Ms Berejiklian at any time contact you in relation to this project?

The Department was not contacted by Ms Berejiklian.

- a. If so, please provide records of conversations/ meetings.

N/A

8. Where will locals be able to access the tunnel other than North Sydney? a. Do you acknowledge that the limited access points will create rat running

Access to the Western Harbour Tunnel at North Sydney is via the following locations

- Berry Street on Ramp, North Sydney
- Via the Warringah Freeway
- Via the Beaches Link component

The Western Harbour Tunnel will also connect into underground connections to the New M4 and M8, including the City West link access at the Rozelle interchange, and future connections such the F6 and Sydney Gateway projects.

- a. Has rat running been modelled?

The redistribution of traffic has been modelled and is considered by the Department in its assessment.

9. The climate and sustainability profile of this project is quite worrying - have you compared a toll road option to other mixed mode options in terms of impact to the environment and climate outcomes?

This comparison is a matter that should be referred to Transport for NSW. Notwithstanding, project assessments consider climate change and the sustainability of projects, and projects are required to meet Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia ratings.

10. Why were the Environmental Management Measures watered down post approval for the Western Harbour Tunnel, such as the deletion of the SG6 requirement for

contamination testing “prior to construction”, the deletion of SG7 Impacts on Site Workers and Local Community and the deletion of the AH1 requirement to further consult on Aboriginal Heritage with the Department of Premier and Cabinet (Heritage)?

This question should be directed to Transport for NSW as these are its commitments.

11. TfNSW stated in a circular to the community that no design changes were made as a result of extensive community feedback on the Western Harbour Tunnel. Why was that deemed acceptable?

This is a matter for Transport for NSW as it is responsible for the design and development of the project as approved by the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.

12. Are you aware that the Metro SouthWest Final Business Case Summary, October 2016 states that “an immersed tube option is a favourable option in terms of station depth and tunnel gradient, but the likely environmental impacts associated with dredging and cofferdam construction in the harbour would be considerable, as compared with the tunnel boring machine options; costs are also likely to be significantly higher than the bored tunnel options”, and that an Immersed Tube Option was not chosen due to the environmental impact?

This question should be directed to Sydney Metro and Transport for NSW.

- a. Given the Metro project crosses East of the project location, according to testimony of Marine Scientists, it would be in a less contaminated location. Why did the Metro team conclude this whereas the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link team has concluded that it is an acceptable risk?

This question should be directed to Sydney Metro and Transport for NSW.

13. Do you acknowledge that the projects increase Vehicle Kilometres Travelled per day by 950 393 kms (Appendix X Tables 3-15 WHT +BL) and vehicle emissions by 67 950 CO<sub>2</sub> per year (Appendix X Table 3-26 WHT + Table 3-16 BL)?

Yes. The Department notes that Vehicle Kilometres Travelled will increase due to increased road capacity and that annual VKT growth with the projects is expected to be less than annual population growth.

- a. Do you acknowledge that total construction emissions will be 1 477 000 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> and operational emissions are 139 363 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> per year by 2037?

Yes. The Department notes that these emissions are consistent with other road projects of this type and scale. In accordance with the conditions of approval, the WHT project is required to meet Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia ratings.

- b. Do you acknowledge that 12 million tonnes of waste will be generated (EIS Appendix X Table 3-9 WHT+BL), 1 450 000 has been deemed suitable for offshore disposal (EIS Appendix X Table 3-9) and 3 972 000 Litres of Water per day will be used to build the tunnels (WHT Chpt 6-90 + BL Chpt 24-6)?

The Department notes that the relevant Table 3-9 identifies that:

- 10,519,573 tonnes of spoil, waste and dredged material to be disposed for the Western Harbour Tunnel project
- 7,044,900 tonnes of spoil, waste and dredged material to be disposed for the Beaches Link project
- 1,219,200 tonnes of dredged material suitable for offshore disposal for the Western Harbour Tunnel project
- 241,600 tonnes of dredged material suitable for offshore disposal for the Beaches Link project

The Department notes that page 6-90 of the Western Harbour Tunnel EIS states that 'Construction of the project would require about 837 kilolitres of potable water and 490 kilolitres of non-potable water per day'.

The Department notes that page 24-6 of the Beaches Link EIS states that 'The average total water demand during construction is estimated to be 2645 kilolitres per day. About 1442 kilolitres per day would be sourced from mains supply (potable water) with the remainder coming from treated groundwater or harvested rainwater (non-potable water)'.

The Department notes that total water use for Greater Sydney in 2019-20 was 534,672 million litres (ML). The projects combined would equate to approximately 0.15% of Sydney's water consumption.

- c. Do you acknowledge that 44 contaminated sites have been identified along the route, with at least 20 Aboriginal Sites within the project footprint and at least 3515 Trees being identified for removal?

The Department notes that the EIS' have identified areas of contamination and various Aboriginal heritage sites within the project area, and that some identified sites will be impacted.

With respect to the Western Harbour Tunnel project, the Department concluded that these impacts were acceptable and could be appropriately managed. With respect to trees, the project approval requires the project to be designed to retain as many existing trees as possible. Replacement trees and plantings must be provided at a ratio of 2:1 and deliver an increase in tree canopy and aim to enhance the relevant council's position in respect of the Sydney Green Grid.