



# **Transport for NSW**

## **Responses to post-hearing questions**

Public Works Committee

Inquiry into Impact of the Western Harbour Tunnel  
and Beaches Link

Hearing Date – Monday, 27 September 2021

## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

**QUESTION:**

1. The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: One of the bits of evidence we take quite strongly from these local communities is that they are prepared to support the road but they do not want residential development. They do not want the development that might flow with this. Has Transport for NSW, has the former Roads and Maritime Services [RMS], been working at any stage over the last few years with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment [DPIE], with the Greater Sydney Commission on land use intensification plans for the northern beaches?

Ms DROVER: Not to my knowledge. Our group is focused on the delivery of this important road infrastructure, not on urban development et cetera.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Ms Drover, I might ask you to take that question on notice, given the period of time you have been in this role. Could you take on notice whether any land use intensification work has been done by RMS in relation to the northern beaches?

Ms DROVER: I am fairly confident there has been no work undertaken. I think that would be brought to my attention if there was. But I am happy to take that on notice and see what information can be brought back, if there is any information in that regard. I was with the RMS prior to joining Transport and was closely associated this project and was not aware of any work of that nature [pg 24]

**ANSWER:**

The Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link Program does not rely on land use intensification plans for the Northern Beaches.

**QUESTION:**

2. The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Have you ever seen a project that the Government was considering to sink billions of dollars into where there were no wider economic benefits when that analysis was done? I have not seen it. Is that a common occurrence? Have you ever seen that?

Ms DROVER: It is common when we are assessing BCRs to assess both the transport-only benefits and the wider economic benefits—yes, absolutely.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, and normally they increase the BCR, as they did for the Western Harbour Tunnel. They do not for the Beaches Link. Have you ever seen that in another project?

Ms DROVER: Again I am not sure what you are referring to in terms of Beaches Link.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I am referring to the documents that went to Cabinet in 2016.

Ms DROVER: Yes, well, they would be Cabinet-in-confidence. I am not across those documents. I was not in government in 2016.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I am hoping that the agency is familiar with them though.

Ms DROVER: What I can say is it is very common in preparing a BCR to look at the transport-only benefits and the wider economic benefits, yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Could you perhaps take that question on notice then in relation to agency?

Ms DROVER: Can I just clarify what the question is?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: What other projects that the Government is considering investing billions of dollars into experience no change in the BCR when wider economic benefits are considered?

Ms DROVER: I can confirm that it is, in my experience, highly unusual not to have wider economic benefits but I am just not clear the point being made, because the BCR [disorder].

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I might move on, Ms Drover. [pg 25]

**ANSWER:**

I refer to the answer provided by Ms Drover in the hearing.

**QUESTION:**

3. The CHAIR: Thank you, Ms Drover. I want to pick up on some of the questions that my colleague the Hon. John Graham was asking about the development partner model. When did Transport decide to abandon that method of procurement?

Ms DROVER: We undertook a rigorous assessment process of the tenders that we received from the three parties. That process had an independent Chair overseeing the tender evaluation panel. There was also a tender review panel. When the evaluation was complete and we could assess the value for money being offered by the three parties, it was assessed that it was not value for money and therefore we did not proceed.

The CHAIR: When was that, Ms Drover?

Ms DROVER: That assessment was made when we evaluated the three tenders that were submitted.

The CHAIR: When was that?

Ms DROVER: It was several months ago. I have not got the exact timing with me. I know we are in feedback sessions at the moment with the three parties, so it must have been a couple of months ago.

The CHAIR: Who made the decision to abandon the development partner model?

Ms DROVER: The tender evaluation panel made a recommendation to the tender review panel, and that recommendation was not to proceed with any of the three

bidders' offers and for Transport to proceed to themselves procure and deliver both packages for the Western Harbour Tunnel.

The CHAIR: Was that decision made by the tender review panel or the tender evaluation panel? There are two of them, are there?

Ms DROVER: The tender evaluation panel makes a recommendation to the review panel, and that ultimately went up to the steering committee for the Western Harbour Tunnel. On that steering committee sits representatives from Transport for NSW and also Treasury.

The CHAIR: So that committee abandoned the development partner model?

Ms DROVER: No. As I said earlier, the recommendation came from those assessing the three tenders, including the independent Chair, who is not from Transport nor Treasury. Their strong recommendation was not to proceed with any of the three tenders.

The CHAIR: Was that decision given concurrence by the Minister or the Government?

Ms DROVER: The Minister was not part of the evaluation process.

The CHAIR: Was it required to go to Cabinet to abandon that decision or was that a decision that Transport could make within its authority, as you described?

Ms DROVER: It was a decision, it is my recollection, of the steering committee to proceed onward.

The CHAIR: Ms Drover, I will press you again—do you know what month we are talking about, or can you take it on notice, as to when you made the decision to abandon?

Ms DROVER: Yes. It was about the middle of this year, 2021.

The CHAIR: In March, April?

Ms DROVER: I think it was a little later than that, but I can take on notice the exact date when the recommendation was endorsed by the steering committee. [pp 34-35]

## **ANSWER**

On 30 June 2021, the Tender Review Panel (TRP) signed off on the evaluation report, endorsing the recommendation of the Tender Evaluation Panel (TEP). On 14 July 2021, the Steering Committee noted the outcome and endorsed both the communication strategy and the payment of bid costs.

**QUESTION:**

4. The CHAIR: There are about seven more minutes left, which will be pooled between the Opposition and the crossbench if there are any particularly strong questions there. I might just complete that round of questions that Ms Boyd was asking. Ms Drover, do you have the number of business acquisitions that are required as part of the Western Harbour Tunnel? You gave us the residential numbers. Do you have the business numbers?

Ms DROVER: There are four non-residential properties that are proposed to be acquired for Western Harbour Tunnel and the Warringah Freeway Upgrade project. I understand we have acquired one out of those four to date.

The CHAIR: Do you have any estimates of both residential and business for the northern Beaches Link component of the project?

Ms DROVER: Yes, I do. These were included in the EIS. Thirty-five residential properties for Beaches Link and 12 non-residential properties for Beaches Link.

The CHAIR: Have you started the acquisition process with those 35 and those 12?

Ms DROVER: For Beaches Link?

The CHAIR: Yes.

Ms DROVER: When the project was announced, even at the concept design stage, there was a high certainty that properties would be acquired for the project. Property owners were given the option whether they would like us to acquire their properties via negotiation. Some of those properties have been acquired—some of them were on a hardship basis. My understanding is that we have issued opening letters for all of the residential properties for Beaches Link, but we have not started the compulsory acquisition process yet.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Ms Drover. You are welcome to provide any additional detail you wish to on that on notice. [pg 42]

**ANSWER:**

To ensure a smooth and transparent process, TfNSW has already spoken with impacted property owners to discuss their options, including providing residential property owners with the option to start the acquisition process early, where this is their preference. All TfNSW offers are based on an independent valuation process.

All property owners are assigned a Personal Manager who will provide support, help them navigate the process and assist with their relocation as needed.

## SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

**QUESTION:**

1. Could you please clarify with data how, when and where there will be a decrease and/or increase in traffic from the construction of the Beaches Link and Western Harbour Tunnel projects?

**ANSWER:**

The two project specific Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) provide details of changes to traffic volumes and patterns as a result of the construction and operation of the respective projects, as well as the cumulative effects of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link Program. Relevant traffic data and forecasts are included in Chapter 8, Chapter 9 and Appendix F of each EIS.

**QUESTION:**

2. You claim that there are start/stop efficiencies - has the net effect been considered given there are greater stop/start issues created on local roads according to the EIS?  
a. What is the Warringah Freeway change in relation to local roads?

**ANSWER:**

Each EIS considers and assesses the net effect of the projects on traffic and transport conditions on motorways and surrounding roads.

These projects are expected to improve travel speeds and reduce the number of stops caused by congestion on both motorways and lower order roads, including local roads.

The Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade EIS indicates that the proposed projects would substantially improve travel conditions on the Warringah Freeway while maintaining performance on surrounding roads in surrounding areas.

**QUESTION:**

3. Can you confirm that the EIS Screenline assessment demonstrates that the Northern Beaches will see an increase in vehicles of 18% with the tunnels by 2037?  
a. Is this due to housing development and the expectation that more vehicle reliant city commuters will move in?

**ANSWER:**

The forecast change in traffic demand as a consequence of the projects is explained in Appendix F of the EIS.

Importantly, the Beaches Link project increases the capacity of the transport network connecting to the Northern Beaches, by adding three lanes in each direction, meaning that pressure will be reduced on the Spit Road and Warringah Road corridors, leading to travel time savings and reliability improvements for public transport, freight and private vehicle trips, regardless of which route is used.

**QUESTION:**

4. Can you name an equivalent overseas tunnel as long as these without air treatment and where there are 20,000 children in close proximity?

**ANSWER:**

In November 2018, the Advisory Committee on Tunnel Air Quality published a review that found emissions from well-designed ventilation outlets have little, if any, impact on surrounding communities and, as such, there is little health benefit in installing filtration and air treatment systems.

No in-tunnel filtration system is proposed for the projects because the air quality assessment in Appendix H to the EIS demonstrates that the ventilation system would be effective in ensuring compliance with both in-tunnel and ambient air quality criteria. The inclusion of tunnel filtration was evaluated and found not to provide any material benefit to air quality or community health.

**QUESTION:**

5. 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?
  - b. Has rat running been modelled?

**ANSWER:**

The Western Harbour Tunnel has entry and exit portals on the Warringah Freeway, north of Ernest Street, and an underground connection to the M4, M8 and M5 corridors via the Rozelle Interchange. Vehicles can also access the Western Harbour Tunnel from the City West Link in Rozelle. There is also an entry portal adjacent to the Warringah Freeway at North Sydney, accessed via Berry Street in North Sydney, and an exit portal to Falcon Street at Crows Nest.

The Beaches Link and the Western Harbour Tunnel will be connected via an underground tunnel at Cammeray.

The entry and exit portals for the Beaches Link are located on the Burnt Bridge Creek Deviation in Balgowlah, Wakehurst Parkway in Killarney Heights, Warringah Freeway in Cammeray and Gore Hill Freeway in Artarmon.

The potential for 'rat running' is considered through traffic assignment at strategic traffic forecasting and detailed microsimulation traffic modelling levels.

'Rat running' can generally be characterised as traffic using lower-order or local roads to avoid congestion on arterial roads. Given that access to the proposed tunnels are direct adaptations of existing motorway access points, and that the performance of the motorway network and lower order roads is expected to be maintained or improved as result of the projects, the project is not expected to create 'rat running' issues.

**QUESTION:**

6. Why does the EIS show that there are greater intersection delays across many surface intersections around the project if there is less surface level traffic as you claim in your submission?

**ANSWER:**

Each EIS noted that intersection delays (a single-point assessment criterion), cannot holistically represent traffic and transport effects/performance in complex and constrained urban areas. Intersection performance is dependent not just on the absolute volume of traffic, but also strategic traffic patterns and the performance of adjacent network elements.

It is for these reasons that an extensive, network-wide traffic forecasting and traffic modelling methodology has been adopted, with primary metrics including average network speeds and travel times. When considering the net effects across the



projects' areas of influence during a forecast typical day, the projects are expected to improve travel speeds and reduce congestion on both motorways and lower order roads, including local roads.

**QUESTION:**

7. Can you confirm that the EIS demonstrates that the Anzac Bridge will see an increase in traffic if the Western Harbour Tunnel is built? According to Appendix F Table 9-4 the increase is 17% by 2037 when compared to the baseline from 2016.

**ANSWER:**

The premise of the question is misleading. The 17 per cent increase compares traffic in 2016 to traffic in 2037 when the Western Harbour Tunnel is operational. This does not take into account that, in the absence of the Western Harbour Tunnel project, daily traffic demand on the Anzac Bridge is forecast to increase by around 34 per cent by 2037. With the construction of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link, traffic data indicates a reduction of traffic on the Anzac Bridge by 11 per cent in 2037, when compared to 2037 conditions without the program.

**QUESTION:**

8. Can you confirm that the EIS demonstrates that the Gladesville Bridge will see an increase in traffic if the Western Harbour Tunnel is built? According to Appendix F Table 9-4 the increase is 20% by 2037 when compared to the baseline from 2016.

**ANSWER:**

The premise of the question is misleading. In the absence of the Western Harbour Tunnel project, daily traffic demand on the Gladesville Bridge is forecast to increase by around 27 per cent by 2037. The Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link Program is not expected to materially change traffic conditions on the Gladesville Bridge.

**QUESTION:**

9. Can you confirm that the community have been told that the 10% claimed decrease in traffic on Military Rd is based on future projected traffic growth on this corridor, as opposed to traffic changing substantially from current levels as a result of the project?

**ANSWER:**

The Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link Program is expected to decrease future daily traffic on Military Road on a typical weekday by around 13 per cent in 2037, when compared to 2037 conditions without the program.

In addition, the Beaches Link is expected to reduce demand on parallel routes through the Mosman-North Sydney area, including Ourimbah Road/Belgrave Street and Kurraba Road corridors, by reducing through traffic travelling to and from the Northern Beaches. By returning traffic to the Spit Road/Military Road corridor, the project is expected to reduce 'rat-running' on parallel routes.

**QUESTION:**

10. Where will this future traffic growth be accommodated given that submissions state that Military Rd is already at capacity at peak hour?

**ANSWER:**

Forecast 2037 conditions, reflective of the anticipated effects of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link Program, indicate a potential small reduction in daily traffic demand on Military Road when compared to existing conditions. In this scenario, demands are within the demonstrated existing capacity of the network.

**QUESTION:**

11. You stated that substratum acquisition will be required and will not be compensated. Given the highly residential route of both tunnels, will the substratum acquisition be in the hundreds, thousands or tens of thousands?

**ANSWER:**

TfNSW only acquires the exact substratum it requires for projects. The final number of substratum acquisitions cannot be confirmed until the Western Harbour Tunnel and the Beaches Link projects are procured and detailed final designs are available.

The number of substratum acquisitions is dependent on the final tunnel alignment, width of the tunnel, and includes partial acquisitions where the tunnel passes under part of a property or under a single property in more than one location.

**QUESTION:**

**12.** Will house deeds be amended to include the substratum acquisition process?

**ANSWER:**

Yes.

**QUESTION:**

**13.** How long does it generally take to process a deed? Are there any foreseeable delays?

**ANSWER:**

TfNSW prepares and lodges the relevant dealing with NSW Land Registry Services within one week. Processing and registration of deeds or land title dealings can vary and is the responsibility of NSW Land Registry Services.

**QUESTION:**

**14.** Why haven't TfNSW reported the Cammeray Golf Course site to the EPA under the Contaminated Lands Act given the previous knowledge of contamination and proximity to children's facilities, where dust migration is a known risk?

**ANSWER:**

Sydney Program Alliance, the Warringah Freeway Upgrade early works contractor, completed a Detailed Site Investigation (DSI) on areas of the Cammeray Golf Course that are to be affected by the Warringah Freeway Upgrade early works program. Further DSIs are being planned for other areas of the Cammeray Golf Course that will be affected by future programs of work. These will be completed by a suitably qualified consultant, to be engaged by the Warringah Freeway Upgrade Main Works contractor. As part of the project's planning approval, each DSI is provided to DPIE. Should the results of these DSIs identify the presence of contamination, consideration is made as to whether the contamination meets the requirements for notification as

set out in the NSW Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) *Guidelines on the Duty to Report Contamination under the Contaminated Land Management Act 1997*. If remediation is required, the site would be remediated and certified by an EPA Site Auditor in accordance with the Conditions of Approval.

**QUESTION:**

**15.** Does the early work on the project include relocation of communications related utilities?

a. Who is conducting this work?

**ANSWER:**

Yes. Sydney Program Alliance is delivering this work, including activities to remove and relocate a range of critical underground and above-ground services and utilities before main construction starts. Some of the relocation work is non-contestable in nature, meaning the work will be undertaken by the utility owner.

**QUESTION:**

**16.** Have you had any COVID-19 delays on other tunnel projects when reliant on overseas contractors?

**ANSWER:**

Infrastructure projects across the world have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**QUESTION:**

**17.** Do you envisage any risk of delay due to overseas contracts or supply?

**ANSWER:**

There is always some risk associated with relying on overseas supply chains, whether due to geopolitical matters, global economic performance or, more recently, a pandemic.

For motorway projects, this risk is typically managed by the construction contractors, as they will source, install, test and commission the relevant elements on behalf of TfNSW.

**QUESTION:**

18. Given overseas contractors have been awarded some of the work - what percentage of jobs will be awarded to overseas workers? What percentage of skilled vs non-skilled jobs?

**ANSWER:**

The Warringah Freeway Upgrade early works activities are being carried out by the Sydney Program Alliance. The Alliance has demonstrated a strong commitment to engage local services, providers and businesses, wherever possible.

The main Warringah Freeway Upgrade design and construction contract, awarded to CPB Contractors and Downer EDI Works, encourages and incentivises diversity in the workforce as well as the use of local business and people.

TfNSW is not aware of any overseas workers required or planned to be used for these works.

Engagement of local people and services is facilitated through various plans and programs, including the NSW Government's Ten Point Commitment to the Construction Sector. The same targets will be adopted for Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link.

**QUESTION:**

19. 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)?

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?

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)?

**ANSWER:**

Both figures account for the difference between the 2037 scenario of constructing the Western Harbour Tunnel Beaches Link and certain other planned transport projects ('Do something cumulative' scenario, as described in the EIS) and the 2037 scenario of the baseline road network ('Do minimum' scenario, as described in the EIS).

While road traffic emissions and volumes are forecast to slightly grow, the improvements in road layout and widening will improve the efficiency of vehicles using the road network in the study area. This, as well as analysis of the benefits of future fuel efficiency and technology changes, suggests that efforts to support the free flow

of traffic, reduce congestion and increase average speed along the project would likely result in less emissions than presented in the EIS.

Chapter 24 of both EISs present and assess estimated volumes of resource use and waste generated by the projects, in both the construction and operational phases, including measures to manage and minimise these impacts.