

**Submission
No 36**

**INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTERN HARBOUR
TUNNEL AND BEACHES LINK**

Name: Mr Ian Sharp

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I am not opposed to a tunnel to the Northern Beaches as such, in fact I believe it is the only way to solve the current transport issues with the Spit Bridge and Military Road. However, I do not support the current design.

I am convinced that six lanes is an over design. The recently completed North Connex tunnel which diverts traffic from Pennant Hills Road has only four lanes to service a large proportion of the traffic between the major centres of Sydney and Newcastle. On the other hand, the Northern Beaches Tunnel will be the third main transport route to the Beaches and it is impossible for me to see why six lanes are required.

I have worked with fellow local professionals on estimates that show costs of the project greatly exceed benefits and cannot be justified economically. Both Infrastructure Australia and Infrastructure NSW rightly give the current proposal a low priority. The current design does not allow for the almost certain impact of increased work from home occurring as a result of the Covid pandemic and the impact of proposed improvements in east west public transport both of which will further reduce the viability of the current design.

I am suggesting the following design issues be considered based on a review of traffic projections:

- Reduce to four lanes
- Consider deleting or deferring the tunnel leg to Balgowlah
- Allow for likely future changes in traffic and travel characteristics. This should include electric vehicles which may well dominate road traffic in the not-too-distant future, possibly within 10 years, a short time after the scheduled completion of the tunnel. Allow for increased use of public transport and new technologies including trackless trams in the tunnel.

I also have concerns with the possible rush to start the project to meet scheduled start date. This will incur high risks of schedule and cost overruns and reduce the attractiveness of the project to investors.

In summary I strongly suggest the project be deferred for a period while a thorough design review and cost benefit analysis are carried out.

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