

Supplementary
Submission
No 46a

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTERN HARBOUR TUNNEL AND BEACHES LINK

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Parliamentary Inquiry into The Impact of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link Project.

Submission against the current proposal on grounds of extreme environmental harm (Addendum).

The Biodiversity Offset Fraud.

Further to my initial submission, I would like to highlight the grotesque sham involved in the NSW Government's Biodiversity Offset scheme which originally promised no net loss of biodiversity but in reality, has accelerated the destruction of NSW's unique natural heritage.

In recent times the Guardian has exposed the scheme to be not just flawed by actually subject to corrupt practices see article below

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/apr/28/deeply-concerning-government-consultant-made-millions-from-nsw-environmental-offsets>

The consultancy named in the article (Ecological) actually produced the tree survey for the Beaches Link project.

Because the tunnel and related road way construction will create such a massive impact on threatened species and their habitat there are a considerable number of "credits" that would need to be purchased. But because for example "Duffys Forest Bushland" is such a rare ecological community there is literally no suitable offset available. So, this globally significant vegetation would be pushed to extinction. As would creatures such as the Rosenberg Goanna which is already incredibly rare. The Seaforth Mintbush (*Prostanthera Marifolia*) was thought to have become extinct but was rediscovered. Now just a few examples exist in areas near Wakehurst Parkway. The fragile presence of this endangered rarity seems to have been overlooked

This project will destroy habitat for six identified threatened fauna species in or next to the construction footprint. (plus, an additional threatened species that has been omitted [The Eastern Bent-winged Bat

They are the Grey headed Flying Fox, Rosenberg's Goanna, The Powerful Owl, large Bent-winged bat, The Little Bent-winged bat and the Large-eared Pied bat. Six other threatened species are deemed highly likely to occur in the construction footprint including the Eastern Pygmy Possum and the Red Crowned Toadlet. There is also a threatened flora species next to Wakehurst Parkway-The Magenta Lilly Pilly (*Syzigium Paniculatum*) that will be destroyed. The total number of eco system and threatened species credits required will supposedly be 4411. Surely a government should not be able to buy its way out of driving extinctions.

Here are links to some of the problems with Biobanking: -

<https://theconversation.com/biodiversity-offsets-could-be-locking-in-species-decline-14177>

In some cases, the same biobanking site has been revealed to have been used several times for different developments! The below linked article, by Rachel Walmsley of the Environmental Defenders Office, describes Biobanking as “The Political Endorsement of Extinction”
https://www.edonsw.org.au/political_endorsement_of_extinction

“Biobanking” is not leading to improved environmental outcomes, it is endorsing local extinctions and rubber-stamping biodiversity destruction.

Modern infrastructure projects should surely protect and retain threatened eco systems and sensitive environments- not use them as collateral damage. An Australian Conservation Foundation report 2020 called “The Extinction

Crisis in Australia’s Cities and Towns” says this: -

While our national parks and wilderness areas are essential for protecting biodiversity, our cities and towns also provide critical habitat for threatened species.

In fact, 25% of Australia’s nationally listed threatened plants and 46% of threatened animals can be found in our urban areas.

Between 2000 and 2017, at least 20,212 hectares of forested habitat for nationally listed threatened species has been destroyed in Australia’s cities and towns. In the last 300 years, 85% of the world’s wetland areas have been destroyed. Last year more than 3 billion Australian animals were killed by bushfires. Are we really in a position now to purposefully destroy more threatened species habitat?

Whilst 64 nations around the globe pledge to reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, the NSW government is still clearing koala habitat, approving new coal mines and even permitting the destruction of our water catchments.

This project is yet another example of archaic planning which will sacrifice biodiversity for bitumen. Which century are we living in??? <https://electrek.co/2020/09/28/64-countries-pledge-to-reverse-biodiversity-loss-by-2030/>

Australia is facing an extinction crisis, with a disgraceful track record of species being sent extinct, with another 13 reported gone in the last 12 months alone.

[Australia confirms extinction of 13 more species, including first reptile since colonisation | Extinct wildlife | The Guardian](#)