

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

**Organisation:** Rozelle Public School Parents and Citizens Association  
**Date Received:** 3 June 2021

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**Rozelle Public School P & C Association**

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**Date:** 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**RE: Parliament of New South Wales, Inquiry into Impact of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link**

We, the concerned parents of Rozelle Public School Parents' and Citizens' Association (P&C), wish to make a submission into the imminent parliamentary inquiry into the "Impact of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link".

Our submission is mainly in relation to our concerns about the impact on air quality from the increase in expected traffic volume and diesel emissions from the trucks and other heavy vehicles servicing the "WHT2 Construction Site" on Victoria Road which we originally expressed in our submission to the EIS in March 2020.

We also have serious reservations about the government's consideration and response to our concerns.

We therefore believe our submission is relevant to the following "Terms of Reference" for the inquiry:

- (f) the consultation methods and effectiveness, both with affected communities and stakeholders,*
- (j) the impact on the environment, including marine ecosystems,*
- (m) any other related matter*

**Rozelle Public School P&C Submission to the EIS**

The following text is a partial excerpt from our original submission to the Western Harbour Tunnel Project's Environmental Impact Statement:

Our greatest concern is the works that will take place in and around the site labelled WHT2 in the EIS. This is the proposed "dive site" located on Victoria Road directly opposite Rozelle Public School.

As stated in table 8-5 from section 8.3.2 of the EIS the total number of vehicles in the morning peak period on Victoria Road (north of the crescent where RPS is located) is 2090 southbound and 4060 northbound. Since 6% of these are classed as heavy vehicles that means that according to your own data there are currently about 370 heavy vehicles in the morning peak when children are making their way to or are already at RPS

Road	Direction	AM peak		PM peak	
		Volume (vehicles)	Heavy vehicle percentage	Volume (vehicles)	Heavy vehicle percentage
Rozelle and surrounds					
Victoria Road north of The Crescent	Northbound	2090	6%	3710	5%
	Southbound	4060	6%	2930	5%

According to table 6-37 from section 6.8.2 an extra 111 heavy vehicles expected on this section of Victoria Road in the morning peak, adding this to the existing heavy vehicle traffic means there will now be approximately 470 heavy vehicles in the morning peak which is a 30% increase on the current volume.

Site	Proposed access route	Daily heavy vehicle movements <sup>1</sup>	Daily light vehicle movements	Construction vehicle movements during AM peak hours (6am to 10am)	
				Heavy vehicles	Light vehicles
Victoria Road (WHT2)	Victoria Road	420	230	111	62

We strongly object to this. It is a major concern to the parents and community as the assumption must be that these heavy vehicles will have diesel engines and due to the current gridlock on Victoria Road in the morning peak this significant increase will only exacerbate the issue. A large percentage of the time these diesel engines will be idling especially as they queue to enter and exit the construction site itself, which will also in itself cause greater congestion for the existing traffic.

The deleterious effects on diesel emissions on children's health are well understood and documented in the scientific community, this UK based study being a good example: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5976105/>

*".....there is also increasing concern that air pollution, especially from diesel vehicles, has major adverse effects in children and that this has long-term consequences. In this review, we report the evidence that underpins the need for exposure reduction policy to focus on diesel vehicles and the potential beneficial effects of such a policy on children's health. Although this review focuses on the heavily dieselised UK environment, it is also relevant to countries where diesel vehicles remain a major source of emissions"*

## **Response to Submissions**

The following, *in italicised text*, are the government's responses lifted from the document "Part C Response to community submissions":

### **C8.3 Impacts to schools**

*Access to the Rozelle Public School would not be materially impacted by construction vehicle movements with construction traffic resulting in only a marginal increase in overall traffic in Rozelle.*

A 30% increase in heavy traffic in the morning peak based on the governments own figures and projections could hardly be considered "marginal" and it is clear that the impact to the school has either been misjudged or underplayed which is of great concern to the community.



### C12.2.2 Impacts on air quality from construction vehicles and barge movements

#### Construction vehicle emissions

*As discussed in the assessment of operational air quality, local air quality is largely dependent on background air quality which is more heavily influenced by regional emissions in the overall airshed than local emissions. Increased emissions from project-related construction vehicles would be temporary and would not be at sufficient levels to significantly contribute to emissions and air quality in the local area.*

While air overall air quality may be heavily influenced by background air quality it is extremely disingenuous of the government to deny the impact of increased local emissions on the health of the local community and in particular of primary age school children.

There are numerous peer reviewed studies linking the impact of increased local emissions to the deterioration in the physical and mental health of those people living, working and studying close to large congested roads.

To take just one this study published in the United States National Institutes of Health asserts that:

*"Traffic congestion increases vehicle emissions and degrades ambient air quality, and recent studies have shown excess morbidity and mortality for drivers, commuters and individuals living near major roadways."*

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4243514/>

The fact the response to the EIS brushed off valid concerns about significantly increasing diesel emissions only metres from a large primary school suggests that the government either does not care or has no plan as to how to mitigate the impact on the community by enforcing air quality standards during construction.

This seeming ambivalence of the government to increased emissions is of immense consternation to the parent community and we would like to make it the major point of concern in our submission to the inquiry.

Leeann Millis (President)

Carolyn Maguire (Secretary)