

Submission
No 56

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTERN HARBOUR TUNNEL AND BEACHES LINK

Name: Ms Janet France

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As a resident of Northbridge and part of the Northbridge Sustainability group I have been watching this develop and am increasingly concerned that the proposed tunnel was always going to go ahead and that the community consultation was only a box ticking process.

My concerns are the adequacy of the consideration of alternative options. The proposed tunnel for cars only is the worst outcome possible. As far back as 1990,s Sydney Water was tasked with rating the best options for connecting the northern beaches with the lower north shore and their findings were that the road tunnel was the least preferred option. The best option was a light rail connecting Chatswood with Dee Why. I do not think that this has been fully explored by the government.

My second concern is the environmental impacts. The tunnel is for cars only. No exclusive bus transit lane which will result in the B line buses backing up with the regular traffic. If we want to encourage people to leave their cars at home what better way than to make the buses faster than car travel? We urgently need to transition away from petrol cars. But this tunnel will create more car usage. Once it is built it can then be parcelled up and sold to a super fund and become even harder to manage the risks.

The actual building process could be looked at as a not in my backyard response from Northbridge residents however we know our suburbs history well and have fought hard to have this area of bush restored. The toxic tip under bicentennial reserve has always been like a cancer bomb encapsulated under the ground that the council deemed could never become vegetable gardens as the asbestos, paints, chemicals and old engine fuel was deemed unsafe and never to be disturbed.

We now know that micro fibres and dust are the silent killers and that many people wont know till many years later that they have inhaled a lethal dose.

The constant noise for 5+ years and traffic chaos is of course a huge concern. However if it was deemed that what is proposed would result in a better outcome for NSW we would support this proposal but this tunnel will create no net benefit as it will result in more cars, more noise, more air pollution and more debt.

I am asking you to consider the public transport options in light of the environmental costs and the benefit to public health and transport that a light rail will deliver.