

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 7 June 2021

Partially
Confidential

As residents we fear that the Western Harbour Tunnel route our houses are in the firing line, with dozens of inner-west residents already claiming their properties have been damaged by similar tunnelling for WestConnex.

The 6.5-kilometre tunnel stretching from Rozelle to North Sydney is shaping up to be a crucial decider in Saturday's state election. The meetings I have attended have also been attended by hundreds of residents who are keen to express their concerns.

I understand that homeowners along WestConnex had issues in obtaining compensation for damage, such as cracked walls, had raised concerns about the recourse available.

We do not want this happening to our property.

Co-organiser John Symonds said satellite data released last week showed tunnelling had damaged homes and land up to 300 metres away, so property surveys prior and post-construction should not be limited to those within 50 metres of tunnelling.

The pair added residents were concerned about how tunnelling could affect their chances of selling.

"I'm a structural engineer, and if you have a crack in the house, it's not a question of how much it costs to repair but does someone not buy your house because it's got a crack in it," Mr Kelly said.

"Would you buy a house that is over the top of the tunnel? I don't think I would, and I think it would devalue a property because you have [lost the land beneath your house]," Mr Symonds added.

As a resident of Louisa Road resident I feel the chaos of the construction phase, in particular, would prove challenging for homeowners and put anyone's plans to sell on hold.

It seems to me that we will have the noise, and no ferry, not know what damage [will be] done to the road or homes or what will happen to the water lapping at the back of the neighbourhood.

We could be looking at years able to resell other than at a discount ... not just on Louisa Road but across Birchgrove and Balmain. And our quality of life over that time will also be effected.

"Values will bounce back up ... [but] in the short term it could certainly do damage," she said.

Cobden & Hayson director Matthew Hayson said the waterfront market had been extremely quiet of late and did not expect a rush to sell. However, he added, buyers were frequently asking about road upgrades in the area.

"I had one lady who doesn't want to buy anywhere in the area [around WestConnex]," Mr Hayson said. "I thought, you might want to move out of the inner west altogether – there are tunnels and projects going everywhere."

I understand that the tunnelling will be 60 and 70 metres below ground in Rozelle and Balmain, it will be less than 40 metres in Birchgrove, according to published approximate tunnel depths. There is no way of knowing the damage that will be caused for sure.

By comparison, stage three of WestConnex will be as shallow as 12 metres.

We want it to be dug deeper if it must go ahead to limit potential damage to properties, or not at all.