

**Submission
No 91**

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTERN HARBOUR TUNNEL AND BEACHES LINK

Organisation: Seaforth Public School P & C Association

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Seaforth Public School Parents & Citizens

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I am making this submission as President of the Seaforth Public School Parent & Citizens Association to express our concerns about the current plans for the Beaches Link Tunnel and how they impact the Seaforth Public School community.

Earlier plans for the tunnel – shared with the school community – indicated that the tunnel entrance would be further from the school. Now the Environmental Impact Statement indicates that the tunnel entrance, including 12 lanes of traffic, ventilation smoke stack and related construction works, with impacts for air quality, noise and vibration, will be directly parallel with the school.

This contradicts indications given to the school community after engaging constructively in the community consultation process.

There is a lack of clarity on which route spoil trucks will take, though there is clarity about their massive volume – as frequently as one every 1-2 minutes at peak construction. This could be disruptive for learning at Seaforth Public and other nearby schools, such as NBSC Balgowlah Boys.

Most importantly, while modeling indicates air quality may improve slightly for the school area, that is based on *expected* traffic patterns. Actual traffic patterns will depend on many factors, such as whether good public transport options are created through well-designed and well-used express bus services through the tunnel, which have yet to be determined. The planned privatisation of NSW bus services adds more uncertainty for this factor.

International studies have shown the dangers to health, particularly in children, of being near many open lanes of traffic. This includes [increases in asthma](#) and impacts on [child brain development](#). This project would increase traffic lanes from 6 to 12 near the school, including a traffic light, and add a nearby smoke stack.

We should not take risks when it comes to child health and safety. This was the position expressed by [Planning Minister Rob Stokes](#), when he was Education Minister, stating: “I won’t be party to putting stacks near kids ... There is no way in hell that I’d support any development that would put the lives of pupils, teachers and parents at risk”.



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We expect Minister Stokes and the NSW Government to live up to that commitment.

Earlier plans, noted in the Environment Impact Statement, make clear that alternative arrangements are possible that position the tunnel entrance further North up Burnt Bridge Deviation. Those plans would ensure that all traffic is within the tunnel before it reaches the school, and hopefully place the smoke stack further away, helping to ensure air quality safety no matter what the eventual traffic patterns.

We ask that all decision-makers ensure the Beaches Link Tunnel entrance and construction works are moved further from Seaforth Public School and other nearby schools, to help ensure child and community safety.

Mark Connelly

President - Seaforth Public School Parent & Citizens Association