

**Submission
No 99**

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

Name: Mr David Cleave

Date Received: 9 June 2021

Please see my attached submission. I have also attached a relevant article from the SMH in support of my position.

Beaches Link Parliamentary Inquiry Submission
Dated 9.6.2021

I have lived in the area for more than 30 years and am familiar with the popularity of Flat Rock Gully for passive recreation, the progress of the bush restoration and regeneration work on the old tip site, the local flora and fauna now living in the area, and the usage of various sporting facilities in the area. I am also a regular kayaker, familiar with the various marine and birdlife life inhabiting Middle Harbour.

I would like to formally register my strong objection to the construction and location of the Beaches Link Tunnel.

My primary objection is based on the proposed unnecessary destruction of the regenerated bushland area of Flat Rock Gully through the intention to place the dive site in the Gully rather than on the other side of Flat Rock drive on the baseball playing field. I am also greatly concerned about the huge negative impact the construction of the harbour crossing will have on Middle Harbour wildlife, pollution through sediment disturbance and damage to the foreshores. Out kayaking, I regularly see the seals, penguins and sea eagles that many may not be aware live around the waters off Clive Park and Seaforth.

My objection to the proposed use of the bushland Gully site is based on the following;

- The alternate playing field site is rarely used and then only by a handful of players, so impact on the sporting community would be minimal.
- The playing field is already flat and level and its use would not require the removal of wildlife habitat and the more than two hundred trees that will be cut down from the alternate Gully site.
- Using the playing field site would involve reduced disturbance of toxic landfill and contaminants or the interference with Flat Rock Creek
- This site could be very easily remediated, (ie just flattened and re-turfed), once works are completed and could be returned for use very quickly
- In the interim, there are any number of local playing fields that could accommodate the very few baseball games played on the site.
- The cost of the project to the taxpayer of using the playing field would surely be minimised as it would not involve investigation of contaminants and pollution control from the tip, would not involve major earthworks to level the land, would not involve major tree and bush clearing and removal or redirection of the creek.

On the other hand, use of the proposed Gully site will involve large scale destruction of an area that has been diligently revegetated and regenerated over more than twenty-five years in a project that must be considered a major success for the environment.

I'd also like to make these further points;

- In terms of habitat, it does not matter whether the bush is 'old-growth' or regenerated. The fact is that it now provides habitat for a wide range of flora and fauna that is so rare in our densely built-up city.
- There is no guarantee or funding in the proposal for the restoration of the bushland area, but even if there was, it would take at least another twenty-five years.
- The Gully is a critical urban bushland island habitat in a densely build up area, and crucially links to other remaining bushland through Artarmon, Greenwich and Lane Cove.
- Once the habitat is destroyed, the wildlife in the immediate and surrounding areas will be displaced and will not wait twenty-five years to return.

- In these times of widespread environmental degradation and species decline, it is incomprehensible to me that this Gully site would not be jealously guarded and protected, but instead, after twenty-five years of restoration work, it would be bulldozed.
- If the project uses the Gully site, the cost in terms of habitat destruction, loss of flora and fauna, potential pollution and remediation and loss of public greenspace is not given value in the proposal but is nonetheless very real.
- This unnecessary destruction is particularly appalling when there is a perfectly viable alternative of the playing field that would preserve the bush and would merely displace a handful of players from one flat grass field to another one nearby for a few years.

I cannot believe that responding to 'community concern' led to the selection of the Gully site over the playing field site as there would be far greater and widespread concern about our environment and the Gully if a survey was conducted. It seems to me that the decision must have been influenced by a local council prioritising maintaining one of their sports assets over preservation of our declining bushland and wildlife.

Please do not unnecessarily destroy and disturb any area of the habitat of Flat Rock Gully when a good alternative exists, nor disturb and risk polluting Middle Harbour. If the project is to go ahead, at least the alternative dive site provides an opportunity to demonstrate that as a community, we do care about our environment and that in these times of increasing pressure on our precious flora and fauna, we are prepared to prioritise and preserve them for generations to come over the temporarily inconvenience of relocating a low participation ball game.

Thank you for considering my views.

David Cleave