

**Submission
No 144**

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

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The Chairman

NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into the impact of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link

My submission:

1. I have strong and comprehensive objections to this entire project (WHT, Northern Beaches Link and the Warringah Freeway Upgrade), and have expressed these concerns in previous submissions and letters to my local member (**the premier Gladys Berejiklian**).
2. The **scale, complexity, cost and the prolonged negative impact** on communities near the work-sites are excessively burdensome and prohibitive, given the relatively minor long-term benefits in the real world of today.
3. The details of the original business case (and any updates or revisions) have not been made public. It is likely that **benefits to local traffic congestion will be relatively minor and short-lived**. Without any long-overdue measures to rapidly reduce petrol and particularly diesel private vehicle use, the trend in traffic will continue upward, negating any transient benefit, and furthermore new traffic will be attracted to the tunnel infrastructure.
4. The touted benefits in time to the (Kingsford Smith) airport are spurious given the proposed predominant but distant new airport, and the likelihood that the **airline industry will never return to its earlier status**.
5. Furthermore, even after the **COVID-19 pandemic** subsides large numbers of people are likely to remain working from home (and not driving into the CBD or elsewhere), thus not needing tunnels and freeway upgrades (expansions). Furthermore, it is likely **the COVID-19 pandemic will remain active and chronic**, with the probable emergence of later new pandemics given the known impacts of humankind on the planet.
6. The local **car-related (and truck-related) pollution** is toxic to our citizens and particularly to children (including neonates and the unborn), and notably related to **ultra-fine nanoparticles**, that have been well-studied, but which were hardly mentioned in the recent EISs. It is thus of great concern that the proposed double exhaust stacks will be located at the Ernest St Bridge near the ANZAC Primary School. These particles are likely to travel far-afield however, and will

descend elsewhere. Air pollution from petroleum-powered vehicles is known to materially contribute to the incidence of **cardio-vascular, pulmonary and neurological disease** (in children and adults), and is known to be carcinogenic (**cancer-causing**).

7. The **Flat Rock Creek Gully** dive site work will be catastrophic to the recovering eco-system in that area, will disturb buried industrial waste (including asbestos), and the B-Double truck movements each minute will drench the adjacent playing fields with toxic diesel exhaust. **My medical advice** to the adjacent Willoughby Leisure Centre and all the schools that use the sporting fields and the parents of children using these amenities on weekends would be either to protest vigorously or to make plans to abandon the area. Another option would be for children (and adults) to wear portable UFP (ultra-fine particle) measuring devices, and to calibrate sporting use of the amenities with toxin levels (and to have high-quality masks available should the levels of toxic particles rise). The Willoughby Sports Centre could similarly measure particle levels and could professionally seal off their premises against the toxic particular effluent.
8. The planned destructive incursion into the **Cammeray Golf Course** is quite intolerable, and would seem far more extensive than indicated in earlier reports and EISs. This deprivation of public space follows the earlier loss of half of this golf course with the construction of the original Warringah expressway. The expected **noise impact for long periods** (hours per day, some nights, over years) is simply excessive, unfair and inhumane.
9. The prolonged, and probably permanent, negative impact on **local traffic patterns** is also quite unacceptable, covering many streets and intersections over many suburbs, with associated noise and toxic air pollution. Berry St in North Sydney will become a high flow freeway.
10. Finally, and possibly most importantly, the tunnel projects do not acknowledge the now dire level of **Climate Change**. Important tipping points have been passed and as a nation, state, city and municipality we must aggressively reduce green-house gas emissions – dramatically reduce petrol and diesel use, replacing private cars with sustainable energy public transport (electric), plus cycleways and walking short distances (the latter two becoming safer with fewer cars and less exhaust exposure).
11. Rather than removing trees (as in the tunnel projects, and in major infra-structure elsewhere in the city) we should be **planting more trees** immediately so that the full benefit of mature tree cover will help with CO₂ extraction and ambient temperature reduction (countering the urban heat islands). As a community (and as a species) we will need to reach Zero net emissions by **2035** (not 2050 which was the target in 2015, but due to our inaction is no longer a meaningful target). The tunnel projects are inconsistent with this existential goal.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Jonathan Page