

**Submission  
No 148**

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

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Submission to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry on  
Impact of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link

Members of the Inquiry,

My submission goes to A) the quality-of-life of current residents in the local areas of Cammeray, Northbridge, Willoughby and some parts of the North Sydney area; 2) social and environmental impacts on areas specifically deemed worth preserving by our forefathers; 3) the historically and culturally significant assets being under threat. As such this submission is linked to the following components stipulated in the guidelines of your valuable inquiry (a); (b); (f); (g); (i); (j); (k); and (m).

First off I would like to thank all involved in the creation of this Inquiry and all parliamentarians who have taken on the responsibility to ensure democratic and moral values towards the decision-making process is maintained and celebrated.

As a resident of Cammeray I see many people from the beaches region drive to our area searching and locating any parking to further their journeys into the city without having to pay the astronomical fees imposed by freeways and the CBD. I believe that to date no evidence has been shown that these issues will not be exacerbated by the proposed rather than reduced in the longer term or the short term. The construction of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link (hereafter known as “WHT&BL”), does not aim to alleviate that component of the day-to-day business as usual, rather seeks to offer those who can afford the trip into the Sydney CBD and link roads will be doing it better and easier, at the cost of all others in the community at large.

The impact of any construction has an impact on local residents and more often than not have the Sydney residents (of many suburbs in the Greater Sydney Area, “GSA”) said to understand it to be for the common good, or so to speak take-one-on-the-chin. Having said that, it is seriously beginning to become ridiculous how many projects have been and are being approved, NOTE by all levels of government, impacting on the lifestyle and qualities of the GSA communities. It may be time for a moratorium on approving the building/expansion/ growing of the city. That aside, the construction of the WHT&BL will severely affect an already overwhelmed road-way system that suffers not just under the weight of for example: local Motor Vehicle Accidents (hereafter known as MVA’s), house fires, road repairs, burst water mains, or police operations, while in addition suffering from events further away from the areas in question, like the arteries to and from the Sydney CBD (for example a MVA in the Sydney Harbour tunnel or bridge). Thus construction alone over a prolonged period must effect the very real long term values of living in the communities we live in and cherish.

Our forefathers had a wonderful vision for the Sydney Harbour foreshores (and beyond) through careful upkeep of preservation and maintenance plans ensuring the highly prized human-ecological relationships were celebrated for the benefit of generations to come. I believe that while successive governments will change designated areas and seek to balance an ever increasing demand to live in our city, I do not believe that this has to be at a cost to our historical and cultural values instigated and celebrated by those who came before us. It is with great sadness I saw the erection of scars on our landscape like the Barangaroo and Bennelong precincts and tram-line reintroduction through Sydney’s CBD to mention just a few. Entering in the proposed WHT&BL will surely not just see the destruction of a number of these historic and ecological sites, it will also allow scars the landscape can never recover from, that those before us

saw as essential recovery and health maintenance sites, particularly for the mental health we so desecrated by the onslaught of our technocratic society. Historically significant stories are under threat of being put into memory banks from which we will never recover them. Hard work of individuals and local governments alike will see the dollars and man-hours gone by the wayside in order to achieve a benefit that really is just another corporate grab for the dollar, rather than secure healthy and more productive lifestyles for the majority of residents.

In addition to the above, there is the issue of noise, visual and exhaust pollutions during construction and potential damage through vibration and digging under the surfaces of fragile and until now stable strata. While this may be dismissed as a temporary issue, it must be understood that for example noise pollution, will effect not only human fragility, but also impact native fauna AND flora. Once these species have left the area, it takes many hours (hundreds, if not thousands or tens of thousands of hours) and designated (expensive community dollars) commitments to see them return and maintained to the places where they were driven from for no apparent (so-called temporary) reason. Am I to believe the operators of the project (WHT&BL) have a two to five decade plan to reintroduce species that were lost? Am I to believe also, that the operators (of the WHT&BL) are preparing the care for those in our communities effected by the long-term effects that have led to their loss of quality of life through adverse mental health and physical ailments? I would like to see their plan on this too often dismissed component of regeneration, rehabilitation and community care processes.

As a Social Ecologist I take exception to hastily introduced, hidden from community consultation, “improvements” that in my experience have NEVER led to desired outcomes stipulated in the original planning and designs without any compromise or overall improvements. This is not just the case in Sydney, Australia but internationally as well. At times successive governments attempt to see the errors of previous action and seek band-aid resolutions that have to be ripped of at one stage or another (as is the nature with any band-aid) causing additional pains in the process. The principles of green economics (placing value on every component of an ecosystem including culturally significant and demographics and seek the cost benefit analyses of the projects perceived outcomes) is not very often properly conducted and does certainly not prescribe to taking all possible factors into account including future thinking on the no-action-taken processes. In this case I have not seen any such Cost Benefit Analysis (hereafter known as “CBA”) being properly conducted with defined parameters laid bare for all to scrutinise. In this particular inquiry even, we see a CBA seeking finances as the driving parameter (h) without really stipulating other CBA components (eg historical significance; cost of dealing with ‘temporary’ transport corridors for construction; cost of long term noise pollution and exhaust increase and habitat loss, cost of increase of structures supporting the newly created amenities, and of course the issue of dealing with structure failures and potential catastrophic emergencies. While those points mention before are significant, please note this is not a comprehensive list at all, they are just a few points off the cuff so to speak.

In summary I would like to conclude this submission by seeking your decision to reject the proposed construction of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link fully and completely without recourse. Particularly because of the fact that the proposal of the construction of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link does not add to:  
the quality-of-life of current residents in the local areas of Cammeray, Northbridge, Willoughby and some parts of the North Sydney area, nor necessarily assist the areas serviced as beneficial as the project proposes;  
enhancing or even protecting the social and environmental status on areas specifically deemed worth preserving by our forefathers, successive local governments, local care groups, educational

facilities and as a resource of significance in maintaining or even improving lifestyles and wellbeing;

C) recognition of the historically and culturally significant assets we celebrate in our areas.

Thank you,

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