

**Submission  
No 171**

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

**Name:** Mr Thomas Threlfall

**Date Received:** 14 June 2021

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Re: Beaches Tunnel

What is the justification for the business case? The costs are not public, serving one of Australia's wealthiest communities (Mosman) and in speaking the experts the only justification that was given was that as a whole all of the links make more financial sense than alone.

This is a line of argument that I have huge issue with, without any further justification (as complex or simple as is provided) I cannot see how this project would never pass the pub test let alone any benefit/cost analysis! Further the areas that bear the weight of the inconvenience, because after all progress is constant, bear none of the benefit.

This smells of contractual reliance on partners such as Transurban or one of the construction partners warrants further investigation.

Areas such as Mosman and the Northern Beaches benefit greatly from the Western Harbours Beaches Tunnel Link (WHBTL) project, and to benefit from this project, in particular Mosman and Cremorne have nil negative impacts. All upside, zero downside. However, as you know, Willoughby, Naremburn and parts of Northbridge area will be devastated by the project, with 6-8 years of ongoing **noise, vibrations, safety issues, pollution, diesel fumes, disruption, traffic and other issues**. As well as permanent and more broadly known issues such as fumes from the ventilation' stacks, that are uniquely advertised as 'world-class technology' yet are unfiltered. Anyone who asks for a fair go and for reasonable safety measures for the local population is labelled a Not in My Back Yard or 'NIMBY' yet the Government listens to the complaints of Mosman and the beaches when they say they don't want traffic in their own backyard, that has been there all along?

Simply, reasonably and fairly put, there are basic measures that the WHBTL and Government need to reasonably put in place to protect and ensure the safety of the local population. That's not NIMBY - it's just asking for basic safety and care measures to be put in place for the local population so that homes can remain livable and roads safe for local residents and in particular school children throughout the 6-8 (or more) years of disruption.

These measures are negligible in cost, but could save lives - and improve the economics of the projects but supporting traffic numbers while also improving the liveability and safety for all concerned in each suburb.

**Why wouldn't the Government put in place these measures when they support all stakeholders? Investors, project outcomes as well as local residents? And how would the Government respond in the event of safety events, crashes, fatalities or other issues later, if these simple procedures aren't put in place?**

To not put them in place would be entirely negligent of the companies involved, Government and Directors and Advisors involved in the development process.

We have attempted numerous times to engage with The Honourable Gladys Berejiklian MP in person meetings or letters. Each of those attempts has been met with either cancelled meetings and/or generic replies that ignore entirely what we believe are constructive, helpful comments that both provide benefit to the commercial value of the WHBTL project, to the potential investors and debt providers, and support those in the area.

**We request that the following very basic and, we believe, commercially accretive for the project measures be established as the baseline in the projects - we suggest you use one (or all) of the suggestions in your submission:**

1. **Proper street-side noise abatement program** to be put in place, for those around the site as well as those who are subject to significantly increased traffic noises due to truck movements, both during and outside of work hours. This is along Flat Rock Drive and Brook Street and should include proper noise abatement walls (not just timber). Flat Rock Drive and Brook Street while 'State roads' on paper, were designed as temporary roads, through an existing federation home area and haven't been made to accommodate the local residents.
  
2. **Limit truck movements to working hours.** Current advertising attempts to mislead people with the very specific 'soil filled trucks' will limit movements. It also states "There may be occasional deliveries and some movements outside of standard construction hours" on the mailout <https://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/projects/01documents/western-harbour-tunnel-beaches-link/whtbl-noise-and-vibration.pdf>. Please define what 'occasional' means and the types of trucks involved.
  
3. **Ensure trucks cannot use air brakes and receive fines for using them.** Flat Rock and Brook Street are not designed for the level of traffic that the roads will undergo.
  
4. **Implement a 50 zone on Flat Rock Drive and Brook Street**, echoing both the safety being put in place for truck drivers and workers and precedents on state roads Ernest Street and River Road. The RMS Beaches Tunnel states the need for Truck drivers and workers on site to have traffic lights and 40 zone on site for safety. There is no reason why truck drivers would need this level of safety, yet local school children and the local community do not. Many driveways onto Brook Street are very short and cars need to reverse in or out of their own driveways. The very few large trucks heading down or uphill at speed that are currently on the road have already caused numerous crashes or near misses (many not recorded on the RMS websites). There is precedent for State roads being lowered to 50kms including Ernest Street and River Road, where locals have significantly more turning space and less safety issues currently on Flat Rock and Brook Street.
  
5. **Install cameras to monitor the speed limit on Flat Rock and Brook Street.** This both drives Government revenue and encourages use of the tunnels.
  
6. **Install traffic lights across Slade Street and Grafton Avenue**, to protect (i) residents and importantly (ii) the thousands of school children who live in the area and/or cross over Flat Rock in order to get to their appointed school in their catchment area. You are putting in place traffic lights for the truck drivers. Is there any reason why truck drivers would require this safety measure, while local residents and school children do not?
  
7. **Implement a bus lane and at a minimum, bus stop** on Brook Street. There are buses that routinely are routed to go along Flat Rock. Implementing a bus lane would both support the use of the tunnel and reduce traffic further on the street.

**8. Monitor noise, vibration and pollution (diesel in particular) before and during the works.** This has not been done in the area, because the outcome is known by RMS. RMS members have also stated at council sessions that they know some of the biggest risks to health and safety will be the fumes from trucks and also

**9. Be transparent about Asbestos and tip refuse treatment.** Will this be trucked out and what are the containment measures if held on site? What is the risk of these?

**10. Be transparent about the company that is removing any toxic soil areas and allow transparent tracking of where this soil is taken and how it is treated.** This is a known area of fraud, where companies paid to remove toxic soil/sludge are not treating it properly and threaten anyone who seeks to find out where it goes.

**11. And as a final point, let's at least try to be world class and forward thinking? To truly open up Sydney, we should be looking to public transport, not more toll roads. Beyond this, the project should be using hydrogen and/or electric vehicles, like many councils are already putting in place. For commercial precedent, please see Hiringa in New Zealand as just one example.**