

**Submission  
No 160**

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

**Name:** Mr Matt and Anna Walton

**Date Received:** 14 June 2021

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15 June 2021

Dear Sir / Madam

I am writing this letter to make a personal objection to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into the Impact of the Western Harbour Tunnel & Beaches Link.

I am a long term resident of Northbridge at \_\_\_\_\_, who together with my wife, have 3 young children aged \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ who attend Northbridge Public School and regularly visit and play sport in local parks including Willoughby Leisure Centre, Bicentennial Reserve Oval, Flat Rock Gully Reserve and Tunks Park.

**I wish to express my strong objection to the proposed Western Harbour Tunnel & Beaches Link - in particular the excavation entry point proposed for Flat Rock Gully which is close to my residence on Pyalla St - and for the reasons outlined in this letter, ask that in your roles as elected representatives of our community you act on your constituents concerns and stop construction of the tunnel.**

**However, if the tunnel does go ahead, to minimise impacts on the local residential community I request that you work with the RMS to relocate the proposed excavation site from Flat Rock Gully to the Artarmon Industrial area.**

Key reasons driving my strong objection, linked to terms of reference for the inquiry, are as follows:

- **(a) The adequacy of the business case for the project, including the cost benefits ratio;**
  - (h) Whether the NSW Government should publish the base-case financial model and benefit cost ratio for the for the project and its component parts; and**
  - (i) Whether the project is subject to the appropriate levels of transparency and accountability that would be expected of a project delivered by a public sector body**
    - I object to the project given the lack of transparency / accountability justifying the Western Harbour Tunnel & Beaches Link benefits, with no business case disclosed to the community detailing the projects costs and benefits, and importantly key assumptions that underpin benefits so that they can be independently reviewed and challenged;
  
- **(b) The adequacy of the consideration of alternative options**
  - I object to the project given that alternate options, such as the Northern Beaches to Chatswood Metro or Northern Beaches to Sydney City heavy rail line, have not been adequately considered;
  - Sydney needs better public transport infrastructure, not toll roads, and the money set aside to fund construction should be used to fund a Northern Beaches train line rather than the proposed toll road;

- **(g) The extent to which changes in population growth, work and travel patterns due to the Covid-19 pandemic have impacted on the original cost benefit ratio**
  - I object to the project on the basis that, even if the projects benefits justified the cost when the business case was originally completed pre-Covid (this can't be determined given it hasn't been publicly released), the Covid-19 driven significant increase in the number of people working from home - and therefore commuting less – would significantly impact the economics of the business case;
- **(j) the impact on the environment, including marine ecosystems:**
- **(k) the adequacy of processes for accessing and responding to noise, vibration and other impacts on residents, during construction and operationally: and**
- **(l) the impact of the project on nearby public sites, including Yurulbin Point and Dawn Fraser Baths**
  - I object to the construction entry point of the proposed Beaches Link at Flat Rock Gully as this will have a significant negative impact on the surrounding Pyalla St area where my family lives for an extended period (6+ years) in the following ways:
    - Air pollution, including potentially carcinogenic fine dust particles like asbestos and hazardous chemicals from old dump sites, will be generated from both tunnel construction and vehicles transporting materials to and from the construction site, causing potential health issues for my family. In addition, when complete the projects 4 unfiltered smoke stacks will pour toxic fumes into the local environment near schools, playing fields and homes;
    - Noise pollution, from both tunnel drilling and vehicles entering / leaving the construction site, will be a permanent 24/7 issue causing further potential stress and health related issues for my family;
    - Vibrations, caused by tunnelling underneath the local area, will potentially cause damage to homes in the area, including my own on Pyalla St;
    - Traffic in the local area will increase significantly causing potential road safety issues, with the ~90 trucks per hour entering / leaving the construction site together with construction workers vehicles putting further strain on an area that already has unsustainably high traffic flows, in particular during school pick up and peak hour periods;
    - Parking will significantly worsen, with trucks and workers at the construction site using local residential streets, already clogged with city commuter and Northbridge Plaza worker vehicles, as parking lots to access the Flat Rock Gully site;
  - In addition, I object to the Flat Rock Gully construction entry point as it will:
    - Result in the destruction of the Flat Rock Gully ecosystem, with the removal of ~390 trees, washing of contaminated water down Flat Rock Creek and clearing of a significant land area covering ~10,000 square metres, destroying the local environment incorporating many native fauna and flora species and enjoyed by locals; and
    - Result in the closure of a number of local sports fields and amenities, including Willoughby Leisure Centre, Bicentennial Reserve Oval, Flat Rock Gully Reserve and Tunks Park due to the site covering a significant area, combined with physical safety, air pollution and noise related issues forcing closing of adjacent facilities.

The Northern Beaches tunnel is not the infrastructure solution that Sydney needs, and my local community will suffer significantly during construction with no short or long term benefits if the proposed tunnel goes ahead.

I sincerely hope that you act in the best interest of the community and stop the Northern Beaches tunnel. However, if the tunnel does go ahead, to minimise impacts on local residential communities, I ask that you work with the RMS to move the proposed excavation entry point at Flat Rock Gully to the Artarmon Industrial area.

Yours sincerely

Matt & Anna Walton