

Submission
No 164

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 18 June 2021

Partially
Confidential

Submission to the Inquiry into the impact of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link (revised 18th June 2021)

TO:

The Public Works Committee inquiring into and reporting on the impact of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link Project, including each of its constituent parts being the Warringah freeway upgrade, the Western Harbour Tunnel and the Beaches Link.

FROM: A highly concerned resident of Balgowlah Heights.

Key highlights of my Submission

Firstly, I would like to commend the Public Works Committee for undertaking this inquire and review, as I believe it is a highly valuable and important exercise to be undertaken: for all concerned.

Secondly, I wish to state that **I totally OBJECT to the proposed Beaches Link, in its entirety.** I strongly consider it should not go ahead at all.

Thirdly, I detail below many of my concerns, but wish to highlight a few key ones here by way of introduction:

- **Lack of** any publicly available **detailed business case or cost-benefit** analysis for whole project.
- **Lack of** any publicly available **stand-alone cost benefit analysis** for the two tunnel projects separately.
- *“Western Harbour Tunnel is essential to the business case for the WestConnex, without it the traffic volumes on Stage 3 ... won’t be enough to cover the cost”* as per Mathew Hounsell, a senior researcher at the UTS Transport Research Centre (from 16th June 2021 interview with Richard Glover on ABC Drive radio segment) – **utilising \$14bn of NSW taxpayer money to shore up the WestConnex business case** is, to my mind as a NSW Taxpayer, unjustified and unwarranted: and sets a very concerning precedent for other infrastructure projects in the future.
- Population of Northern Beaches approximately 275,000 (2018 census), total cost of the two tunnels approximately \$14 billion → **cost of over \$50,000 per Northern Beaches resident** to achieve unclear, if any, travel time savings.
- Could and/or **should this \$50,000 per resident be better spent elsewhere?**
- The number of statements or diagrams that appear to be misleading. For example, in Dec 2020 it was reported that *“The State Government said drivers would bypass 19 sets of traffic lights through The Spit, Mosman and Neutral Bay, shaving 56 minutes off their travel time from Dee Why to Sydney Airport”*. This is **quite an amazing feat**, given that non-peak travel time for such a journey is only 34 minutes !
- Of the expected **163,000 cubic metres of “soft soils and sediment”** to be dredged and excavated from Middle Harbour, approximately **153,000 cubic metres will be dumped out at sea**. The potential impacts to marine life of such an action does not seem to be adequately addressed in any part of the EIS (Environmental Impact Statement).
- There is a **significant risk** to Sydney’s last remain colony of Little Penguins.
- **Concerns re \$14bn budget** and estimated time of build of 6 years. Already there are suggestions the build could take 10 years, and **experience to date** in NSW is that **budgeted costs** of infrastructure on this scale and complexity have **been found to be under-estimated in both terms of time-scale and dollars**. Any over-run very likely to require NSW Government underwriting as Transurban only interested in taking 49% share at current cost – so risk that any losses to be borne by NSW Taxpayers.

Some explanation of my background:

I am a resident of Balgowlah Heights, and have lived here for over 15 years. Prior to moving here I lived for many years in Mosman, and prior to that Kirribilli. I therefore have a very personal appreciation and experience of the traffic flows and congestion issues that face residents living on both sides of the Spit Bridge.

It is with these years of experience that I can categorically say that I consider the proposed Beaches Link tunnel **to be entirely the wrong manner** in which to address the congestion issues to the north and south of the Spit Bridge, and that there are far more effective, more efficient, and less costly alternatives that could achieve better outcomes for all: as I will endeavour to explain beyond.

Comments addressing each of the Committee's overall terms of reference.

With regards to your overall terms of reference, I wish to make the following comments and observations.

(a) the adequacy of the business case for the project, including the cost benefits ratio

To my knowledge the project did not include a publicly available cost-benefit analysis. How many of the State's residents are thus supposed to consider if the business case stacks up is very hard to understand. If the business case is so overwhelmingly positive, why not release all the details?

In addition, there does not seem to be separate stand-alone business-cases or cost-benefit analysis for each of the two tunnel projects separately. Is it possible that the business-case for the Western Harbour Tunnel only works if traffic is forced into it from the Beaches Link? Does the Beaches Link business case on its own stack up?

Further, I have not yet seen anything that shows the Beaches Link business case considers where the traffic from the Northern Beaches is headed. I am concerned there has been an assumption that the majority of the traffic is seeking to get into Sydney's CBD or the airport. An independent assessment of traffic movement on the beaches (by Dr Michelle Zeibots) showed that approximately 44% of residents travel from East to West. The remainder is evenly split between local traffic and those who cross the Spit bridge (but don't necessarily travel to the city). Dr Zeibot's recommendation was for traffic relieving infrastructure for the Beaches to improve East to West public transport and could be achieved at far less cost than the proposed tunnel. This was supported by the Beaches Council but rejected by the current State government.

From my personal perspective, for over 8 years I worked in North Sydney. I chose to drive there as I could get to work much quicker by driving across the Spit Bridge and through Mosman & Cremorne to get to North Sydney than the two buses that I would have to take instead. A Beaches Link Tunnel would be of no use to all those working in North Sydney. In addition, the bus that used to run past my door to the CBD (I would get off at The Oaks in Neutral Bay to change for bus to North Sydney) has since COVID been completely cancelled, to be replaced by a local bus that would take me to Seaforth where I can change onto a bus to CBD – so now I would need 3 buses to get to North Sydney (the cynic in me has wondered if getting rid of the many Northern Beaches buses running directly to the CBD, and replacing them with only local-loop buses so people going to CBD need to take get off and wait for a second bus to CBD was purely to encourage more people to use cars, and hopefully add to the congestion on Spit Bridge that had disappeared during COVID – and which might put any business-case for the Beaches Link at risk ... surely no one would be that contriving?).

Prior to working in North Sydney I worked in Chatswood – and thus was one of the 44% of residents travelling from East to West. The Beaches Link would again therefore make no difference to such travelling.

(b) the adequacy of the consideration of alternative options

It is my understanding that the terms of reference for the Beaches Link Tunnel proposal excluded consideration of public transport options and options for better linking residents to public transport.

This strikes me as very odd, and not the type of broad-review approach any commercial business would take. I therefore see no justification in excluding such considerations and investigation. Improvements to public transport (rather than post-Christmas 2020 cuts to public transport, made without any public consultation or any apparent considerations as to whether this would reduce people’s commuting time, or force them to take their car instead).

In addition, the major pinch-point for Northern Beaches traffic of the Wakehurst Parkway from Narrabeen Lake to Warringah Road (which is frequently ‘closed due to flooding’ whenever heavy consistent rain hits Sydney) has no current plans for any upgrades or solution to the flooding issue. **If goal is to ease traffic congestion, this road section should be upgraded and resolved BEFORE any work commenced on Beaches Link.**

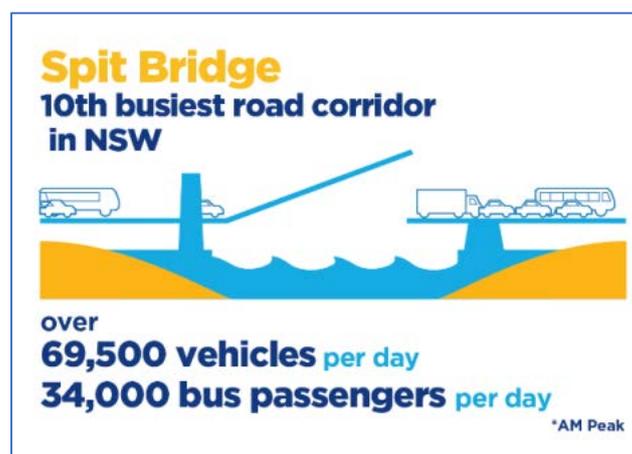
(c) the cost of the project, including the reasons for overruns

I have yet to see any costings that separate out the \$14billion between the two tunnels.

The population of the Northern Beaches is approximately 275,000 (2018 census), total cost of the two tunnels approximately \$14 billion → **cost of over \$50,000 per resident of Northern Beaches** to achieve unclear level of travel time savings.

Taking this further still: the EIS notes there are over 69,500 vehicles per day using Spit Bridge. If we assumed 70,000 vehicles, then combined tunnel cost of \$14bn → **cost of \$200,000 per vehicle.**

I do wonder if \$50,000 per resident (or \$200,000 per vehicle) could be better spent elsewhere. Indeed, according to page 3 of the EIS’s Executive Summary:



I would be keen to know which are the 1st to 9th busiest road corridors in NSW ... and whether one or more of them could be improved for less than \$200,000 per vehicle: and **would such alternative road improvements benefit much more than 70,000 drivers per day?**

(d) the consideration of the governance and structure of the project including the use of a 'development partner' model

No comment – as have not had the time to review this sufficiently to comment.

(e) the extent to which the project is meeting the original goals of the project

Exceptionally good question. I have spent a while trying to Google and find the “original goals of the project” with no great success. It would be interesting to read these to see:

(a) if the project is meeting these goals, and

(b) whether the goals are even relevant now in a post-COVID lock-down work where so many businesses have already adopted new flexible working for their employees. In my case I am now generally working only 3 days in the office, and 2 days from home: and on those days I do drive to work across Spit Bridge I have found the traffic far less congested than pre-COVID, and I travel in the middle of peak-hour! (NB I did see during one public-consultation Zoom call a graph that suggested peak-hour traffic over Spit Bridge had returned to same levels as pre-COVID. I would completely dispute this data based on my own actual experience – perhaps number of vehicles has risen to same level, but I would suggest the spread of when they are traveling within those ‘peak-hours’ has changed drastically so that congestion during that period HAS reduced – traffic flow much quicker than before. Need clarity on how long “peak-hours” lasts for, and more detailed data of volume of traffic in each 10 minute segment to determine true level of congestion being experienced or not experienced).

If the ORIGINAL goal had been that of easing traffic congestion, I have major concerns that the whilst evidence is mounting that traffic congestion will not be eased (or if eased, for only 1-2 years AFTER major traffic disruption in the 6-10 year build phase before all time savings are lost), that NOW the key goal of the project is to shore up the WestConnex failing business case. As noted on the ABC Radio’s show (Drive with Richard Glover) on 16th June 2021 *“Western Harbour Tunnel is essential to the business case for the WestConnex, without it the traffic volumes on Stage 3 ... won’t be enough to cover the cost”* as per Mathew Hounsell, a senior researcher at the UTS Transport Research Centre (from 17th June 2021 interview with Richard Glover on ABC Drive radio segment) – **utilising \$14bn of NSW taxpayer money to shore up the WestConnex business case** is, to my mind as a NSW Taxpayer, unjustified and unwarranted: and sets a very concerning precedent for other infrastructure projects in the future.

(f) the consultation methods and effectiveness, both with affected communities and Stakeholders

I have sadly found neither the face-to-face (when it was possible) nor Zoom meeting public consultation to offer me any comfort that public input was being appropriately or adequately listened to.

At the initial in-person consultation pre-COVID, the engineers present did not appear to have an understanding of the typical traffic movement in the area of Balgowlah/Seaforth: and when attempts were made to explain the subtleties of traffic-flows involved, such information appeared to be dismissed. As previously noted above, at another Zoom meeting the Transport NSW representative noted that traffic volumes across the Spit Bridge have returned to pre-COVID levels – however, as one of the people who travels across the Spit Bridge in peak-hour this either is patently untrue, or the statistics involved are not being appropriately analysed. Even if volumes are back to pre-COVID levels (which I would dispute), the timing of these volumes must be different, because I know from personal experience my average speed down the hill (while going South) and across Spit Bridge is currently much quicker than pre-COVID. At the last Zoom consultation multiple members of the community raised concerns with this “we are back to pre-COVID volume” statement, yet such concerns were ignored.

If it is true that traffic across the Spit has returned to pre-COVID volumes in peak-time, I would like to see the data split to show volumes in each 10-minute period between 6am-10am, as I believe drivers have significantly changed their travel time choices due to changed work flexibility (i.e. travelling earlier or later than they used to). This morning (Thursday 17th June 2021) I drove across the Spit Bridge at 7.35am and the traffic was flowing extremely well and far better than it ever did at that time pre-COVID (and Thursday is usually one of the worst days for traffic, and we are NOT in a school holiday at present).

Finally, during the community consultation there does not seem to have been any monitoring, investigation or assessment of where drivers actually travel: there simply seems to have been an assumption that the majority of the traffic goes to the city or beyond it (e.g. to airport), and ignoring the local movement entirely, or those travelling from East to West (e.g. from Manly to Mosman, Cremorne, Neutral Bay, Crows Nest, St Leonards, etc).

(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 believe there has been a significant impact on work and travel patterns due to the COVID-19 pandemic. From my own personal experience I now generally only travel to my office 3-days a week, and work-from-home the other 2-days a week. The vast majority of my work colleagues are doing the same.

As noted earlier, my travel times across Spit Bridge and through Mosman, Cremorne & Neutral Bay are vastly improved to my pre-COVID travel times: and I am driving during the middle of peak-hour.

I therefore consider it critical that a completely new cost-benefit ratio analysis be undertaken, and that it be made publicly available once complete.

With regards to traffic patterns – I implore all Committee members to please, please, **please ignore any traffic reports you may hear in the mornings**. Over the past 2 years, on many occasions I have been literally driving over the Spit Bridge when the radio traffic-report would come on and say “very bad congestion and slow-run on the Spit Bridge” ... when in reality I was driving across at a very acceptable speed. I have called the radio-station to complain about this, and was informed they got their ‘traffic-feed’ from an outsourced 3rd party. Additionally, to my mind the traffic reports seem to mention Spit Bridge now much more frequently than they used to, and more than other known traffic bottle necks in Sydney (e.g. I hardly hear of Parramatta Road delays, unless an actual accident on it, yet know from personal experience it is usually as congested as Spit Bridge). I am not sure why Spit Bridge traffic (or Military Road in Mosman) is now seemingly being reported on as “congested” much more than it used to (with no change in actual congestion), but I do have my own cynical suspicions!

(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

Absolutely they should.

PLUS, they should re-work all of these based on actual and current data of today, with changed traffic patterns and movements since the COVID pandemic.

There HAS been a change in work patterns and flexibility that is **here to stay**. It is a fallacy to believe the changes are only temporary and that everyone will go back to 5-days a week in the office. Indeed the **McKinsey Global Institute** has recently noted that **in early 2020 changes to work that had been predicted to pan out over the next five years were delivered in 60 days** (ref: Baig, A, et al. (2020) *The COVID-19 recovery plan will be digital: A plan for the first 90 days*).

Similarly, as commented on by Andrea Clarke in her well researched book (*“Future Fit – how to stay relevant and competitive in the future of work”*)

“...After decades of daily commute drudgery to reach a cement office block and impersonal cubicle, **the traditional office model is now in a final act...**” (page 9 of her book – *emphasis added by me*).

And with this I predict the traffic flows, and timing of those flows, will also be different in the immediate and long-term future than they were before the COVID pandemic.

(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 have found the lack of public availability of detailed cost-benefit analysis or business-case justification and explanation to be highly lacking in the level of transparency and accountability that I would expect for a project of such size, scale, cost and complexity.

(j) the impact on the environment, including marine ecosystems,

With regards to impact on the environment

(A) Soft soils and sediment

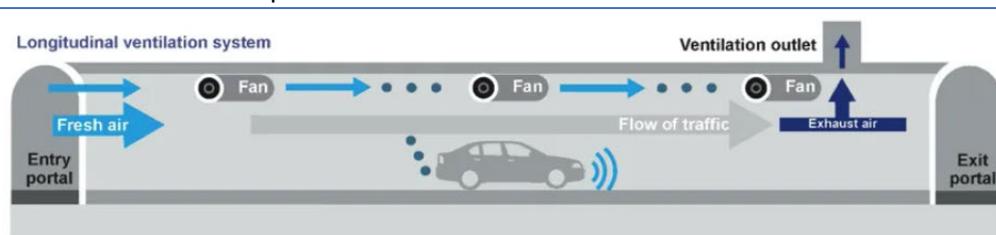
Of the expected **163,000 cubic metres of “soft soils and sediment”** to be dredged and excavated from Middle Harbour, approximately **153,000 cubic metres will be dumped out at sea**. The potential impacts to marine life of such an action does not seem to be adequately addressed in any part of the EIS (Environmental Impact Statement).

(B) Exhaust stacks – lack of filters

I have major concerns regarding the proposal to use **unfiltered** exhaust stacks. It is proposed that the 7.5km tunnel with use a *“longitudinal ventilation system”* leading to an unfiltered *“ventilation outlet”*. In plain- English this means:

Have fans that suck fresh air in at one end, and then after 7.5km of tunnel (with all the traffic in there at that time), have an exhaust fan take all this whole volume of air and blow it out of an outlet into th local community, with **absolutely no filtering out of all the emission pollutants**.

As per the Beaches Link EIS report:



How longitudinal ventilation works. Photo: Beaches Link EIS report

“The inclusion of filtration would result in no material change in air quality in the surrounding community when compared to the current project ventilation system and outlet design,” the report concludes. “Any predicted changes in the concentration of pollutants would be largely driven by changes in the surface road traffic.”

I am no air-quality expert, however, I suggest if **defies belief that 7.5km of pollution being pumped out into one location** at the end of the tunnel would “result in **no material change in air quality**”.

In addition, if it is considered that such a statement is not valid, then how much of the rest of EIS can be relied upon?

The exhaust stack at the Balgowlah end exits extremely close to 3 schools – **so children attending these three schools will be subject to the pollution of 7.5km of traffic emissions for the whole of their years at these school facilities.** I implore the Public Works Committee to insist on detailed analysis to be provided to them of **the long-term health risks for these students** being subjected to such pollution for such a **significant portion of their formative years** ... how would the Committee members feel about their children, or children of their near family, attending a school with such unfiltered emissions being released so close to the school?

With regards to the impact on marine life I have significant concerns for the welfare of many threatened species of marine-life in Sydney Harbour, and the risk of seriously reducing the numbers or potential extinction of of the last remaining penguin colony of the Little Penguins in Manly harbour.

The potential environmental impact on marine life in the Middle Harbour area including the Spit, Clontarf, Beauty Point, Sailors Bay, The Spit, Clontarf and Manly lagoon should not be underestimated. During the construction phase there will be significant disturbance of the finely-balance ecological interaction of marine life. The stirring up and dredging of sediment is likely to spread accumulated toxins and affect the seagrass and the microscopic organisms within which will threaten the survival of larger animals such as the White's seahorse, several fish species and additionally the Little Penguins.

Whilst the penguin's nests are located within the protected bays of Manly, the penguins travel all over the harbour for foraging. Many sightings have been reported all the way up Middle Harbour as far as Northbridge. All the proposed dredging work and wash-off via Manly Dam has potential to have a major impact on the finely-balance marine life and their food-supplies. And, this is before impact of any potential fuel or oil leaks that could occur from equipment used during the construction period. I am extremely worried that the dredging and potential fuel and oil leaks will damage the seagrass patches and with it the foraging opportunities of Sydney's last remaining penguin colony.

On a separate matter, **High contamination** risk has been cited for heavy metals and organotoxins into Middle Harbour from tunnel dredging, polluting The Spit, Clontarf and threatening harbour species including the last population of penguins which the EIS states will likely permanently leave the area. Swimming areas such as Clontarf is an area I, my family, and our friends use frequently, and thus I am concerned about the long-term health effects there could be from swimming there after dredging has occurred.

(k) the adequacy of processes for accessing and responding to noise, vibration and other impacts on residents, during construction and operationally

Traffic mitigation and management during the build appears to be woefully inadequate. The EIS cites **2.5 trucks per minute** onto Sydney Rd and Wakehurst Parkway sites: such volume will bring traffic on the beaches to a complete standstill (or at best a crawl slower than I can stroll) and all this with our public bus routes having recently been drastically reduced and made unworkable. The high truck volume poses a significant risk to students at Balgowlah Boys High and to all motorists along the Spit and Wakehurst Parkway.

There has been little to no information about how traffic will be managed throughout our area over the lengthy period of the build: nor information about how people who live in the suburbs of Balgowlah Heights, Clontarf, Seaforth and Balgowlah will be able to move about our suburbs and to Mosman once the tunnel is built. We frequently travel to Mosman to shop, dine and see movies and

understand there **will be significant restrictions to accessing these suburbs including the removal of the right-hand turn from Military Road onto Ourimbah Rd.** This will have implications for the businesses and residents of Mosman and Cremorne.

Commute time: I work long hours in a business that makes a significant impact on protecting people's lives (both physically and financially). I am finding it hard to imagine how I shall manage work-related stress on top of the truly horrendous commuting time which will occur and is predicted to last at least 6 years and has been estimated to stretch to 8-10 years. That is a phenomenally significant impact on a region – for some of the locals it will see out their life-time.

With regards to ongoing operational aspects of the Beaches Tunnel, I refer back to my early noted concerns with the unfiltered exhaust stack. The exit stack is in close proximity to numerous houses and local schools and childcare centres will have significant health implications. While similar stacks are in use in NSW, they **do not match international standards**. Nowhere in the world is a tunnel of the proposed length of this one serviced by a single unfiltered stack. Other 1st world countries might have unfiltered stacks on occasions, yet where this happens it seems to be in essentially completely unpopulated areas, and even then they have multiple stacks spaced less than 7.5km apart.

At one public consultation meeting, it was noted by a Transport NSW representative that the Beaches Tunnel would lead to a reduced level of pollution in many areas along the 7.5km route – well, this does seem obvious if the cars are now under-ground, but that still does not warrant taking ALL the pollution from a 7.5km tunnel and shoving it out of a stack in a single location (a residential area) completely unfiltered. Additionally, whilst I understand it was decided to move the air stack from Dudley Street to next to Balgowlah Boys High School, I believe the air quality impact was not re-assessed: leaving the figures being based on the Dudley St readings.

Access: My family and I will not be able to access the tunnel for our commuting when it does open as it would require us to drive North and negotiate heavy traffic to access. Once in the tunnel it will not take any of us to our respective workplaces, as none of us work in the CBD. However, travelling along Military Road will now be even harder **due to closure of Ourimbah Road in the East and Ernest St in the west**. Crossing Warringah Freeway at Falcon St to access Crows Nest will become unworkable.

Permanent reduction in amenity: The tunnel proposal does not include assessment of the very significant reduction of amenity to those around the build (this includes people living alongside the build and all the surrounding suburbs) throughout the duration of the build and once completed. Residents of the main suburbs around the build (Balgowlah, Balgowlah Heights, Balgowlah North and Seaforth, will become 'locked' in our suburb once completed due to poor access to the tunnel and compromised ability to move around our suburbs. This is true especially with consideration of the many of us who move between the beaches and Mosman/Cremorne/Crow's Nest, or between and through these suburbs to travel east or north to Brookvale, Manly vale and Curl Curl etc.

(l) the impact of the project on nearby public sites, including Yurulbin Point and Dawn Fraser Baths

I sadly have not had sufficient time to inform myself fully on the impact of these public sites. However, I am aware that The Manly dam area is also significant to our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with important cultural areas.

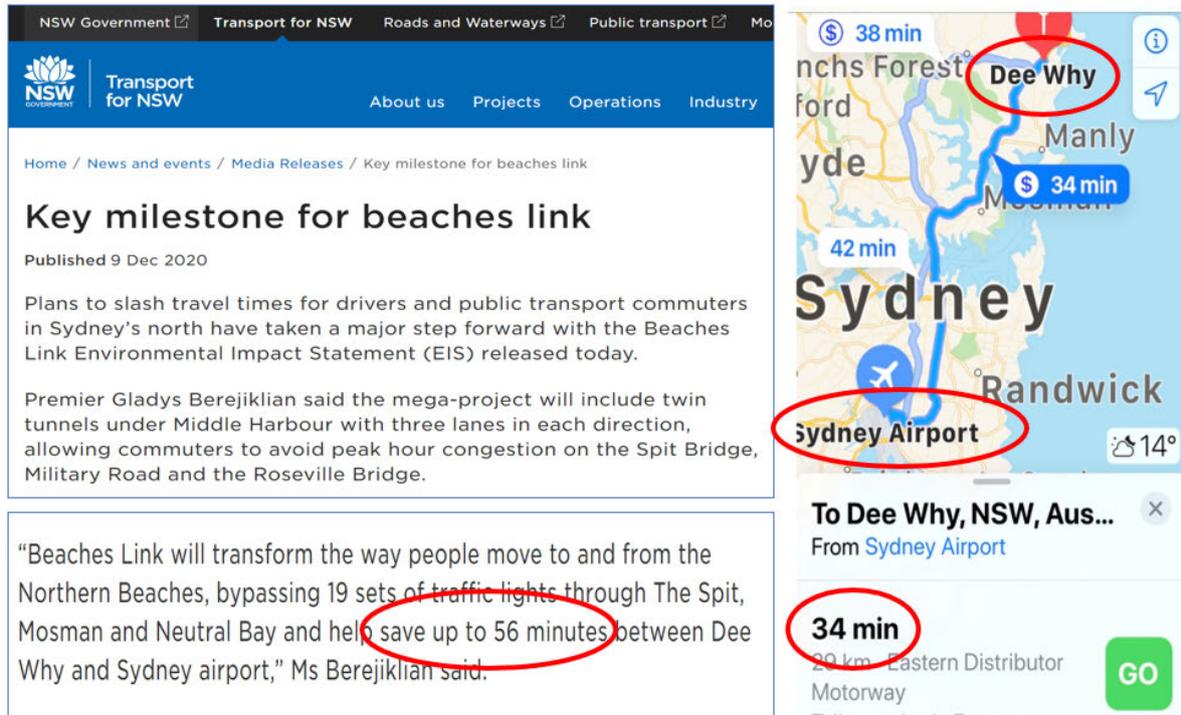
(m) any other related matters

Potentially misleading statements or diagrams

During the consultation process and over the past couple of years I have been becoming increasingly concerned about matters that I have found potentially misleading. Two examples come to mind immediately in relation proposed traffic-travel-time savings, and with regards to what vehicles could use the Beaches Link tunnel.

Proposed traffic-travel-time savings.

As shown below, in Dec 2020 it was reported that drivers would bypass "...19 sets of traffic lights through The Spit, Mosman and Neutral Bay, **shaving 56 minutes off their travel time** from Dee Why to Sydney Airport". This is **quite an amazing feat**, given that non-peak travel time for such a **journey is currently only 34 minutes !**



In addition, whilst there might be "19 sets of traffic lights", many of these are pedestrian activated lights, and even where not, the lights are set to "extended green-light timing" during morning commute times to reduce congestion. My experience from my commuting in peak-hour traffic is that of these 19 lights **I am generally only stopped by usually 6 of the 19 lights**. The 6 lights that generally stop me during my morning commute going southwards across Spit Bridge and along Military Road are:

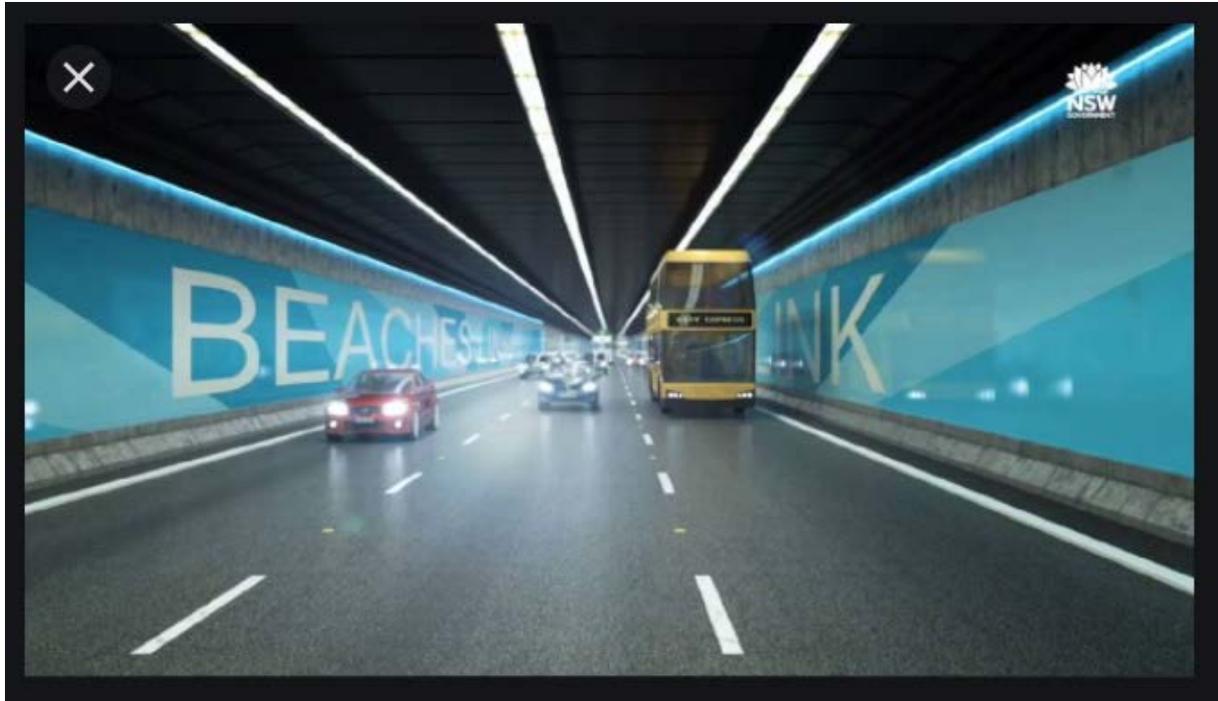
1. Bottom of Spit Hill on Mosman side;
2. Awaba Street lights;
3. Spit Road/Military Road lights;
4. Spofforth Street/Military Road lights;
5. Lights at The Oaks in Neutral Bay.
6. Lights onto Sydney Harbour Bridge from Falcon Street.

So whilst 19 lights sounds like a lot, the reality is we are generally only talking about 6 lights, without too much delay at each of these. **Certainly not enough to warrant spending \$14billion on the proposed tunnels.**

Types of vehicles that are able to use the Beaches Link Tunnel.

In the following picture that has been used frequently in promoting the Beaches Link Tunnel (or variations of it), it would appear that the tunnel will be large enough to take the B1 B-line bus that serves residents on the Northern Beaches. However, **I have been led to believe that the tunnel will in fact NOT be tall enough to accommodate the B-line bus.**

I would ask that the Committee clarify if I am correct in my understanding or not: if a B1 bus will not fit in the tunnel, then this would therefore seem to provide a visual representation of use of the tunnel that will be impossible. **This, to my mind and my personal opinion, seems somewhat misleading – but that is just my opinion** and not in any way meant or intended to infer or be taken as a factual statement of what may or may not have been intended. I accept that many people might see the picture and instantly realise “that is just to create a vibe or feel for the project, and in no way meant to infer how the tunnel might be used for public transport”.



NEXT STEPS:

Firstly, I would like to thank the Committee for reading and considering my submission.

Secondly I would implore you to take all that I had stated into account in your considerations, and hopefully concur with my view, and that **the Committee should totally OBJECT to the proposed Beaches Link, in its entirety, and direct that it should not go ahead at all, and all works that have started be ceased and not continued.**

Any penalty costs that might be incurred by the NSW Government to cease any current work and cancel any contracts so far entered into, will most likely still be far less than the risked over-runs on the budgeted costs, prevent 10 years of traffic chaos (during expected build time), prevent a major environment risk to the area and Sydney Harbour, and **free-up NSW Taxpayer funds of \$14bn for use on other more worthy and impactful projects that should benefit a far greater proportion of the Sydney and/or other NSW residents than will the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link.**

PLEASE SPEND THE \$14bn elsewhere to improve the lives of more NSW taxpayers and their families.

Spending \$14bn (or ~\$50,000 per Northern Beaches resident: of which I am one!), on this project does not seem to be, in my humble opinion, the best allocation of NSW Taxpayer funds. Given that the Spit Bridge is apparently the 10th most congested road in NSW (at peak times): then surely at a minimum the \$14bn should first go to the 1st to 9th most congested roads, **or towards more hospitals and/or schools in other parts of Sydney or regional NSW**, or additional public transport on routes that match where people are trying to get to by car if public transport not currently available.