

**Submission
No 201**

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

Name: Mr Michael Wright

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Western Harbour Crossing, Warringah Freeway Upgrade and Beaches Link – points of objection

- Despite RMS claims in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), exhaust fumes and microscopic particulates from vehicles emitted via smokestacks in the close proximity of schools, day-care centres and thousands of homes will – as confirmed by the latest medical research, and **contrary to the [outdated] advice from the State Chief Medical Officer** – put our children and the elderly at unacceptable risk for many years, despite the future promise of low-emission (eg, electric) vehicles. (**NB: North Sydney LGA has the highest concentration of schools and child-care centres anywhere in Australia.**)
- This will only be exacerbated by the Federal Government's refusal to adopt the highest international standards of vehicle emissions and fuel cleanliness (eg, Euro 6 and 7), so that **vehicles in Australia are 'dirtier' than most others.**
- If exhaust fumes and particulates from the unfiltered smokestacks are added to the air on days when bushfire smoke is already raising the air quality index (AQI) to danger levels (as it did during the 2019–20 bushfires), the situation will only be made far far worse...
Please demand that the tunnels (± the Freeway) should be closed to ALL traffic on days when the AQI reaches the danger level of 200 or more.
- Almost all other progressive cities in the world are restricting or reducing the growth of road traffic – particularly private cars and fume-belching trucks – in favour of public transport. Yet the NSW Government forbade RMS from considering public transport alternatives (such as Light Rail lines).
PLEASE REQUIRE RMS TO PROVE THIS IS THE BEST SOLUTION.
- If the scheme goes ahead, it should be redesigned with exhaust + fresh-air stacks no more than 4–5km apart, like the Stockholm E4 bypass tunnel. **MAKE THIS A CONDITION FOR APPROVAL.**
- I object to the loss of the underground reservoir beneath Cammeray Golf Club – a major irrigation source for open spaces in the area – due to the major building works for a exhaust pumping station; this will have a major local environmental impact.
A SOLUTION MUST BE FOUND THAT RETAINS THIS INVALUABLE ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE.
- I object to the taking of public open space for this project. EG: Land will be taken from St Leonards Park, as well as from Cammeray Golf Club – significantly reducing local open space. On a smaller scale, part of the south-east corner of Anzac Park will be taken permanently for the realignment of Cammeray Avenue, due to widening of the Freeway.
PLEASE DEMAND as a CONDITION FOR APPROVAL of the scheme that at least an equal area of green space be created locally for all public open space taken by the project.
- There will be years and years of traffic chaos, noise, vibration, dust, and hundreds of trucks thundering past Lower North Shore homes as this grandiose project is built. This will cause serious health impacts on local residents and the serious risk of damage to buildings.
- **Work on the Warringah Freeway** – Noise levels throughout the day will be incredibly loud and continuous for five or six years or more. **How are we supposed to live our lives with that level, pitch and duration of noise?**
- The EIS itself admits that excessive noise will impact more than 5000 residences.
- The EIS envisages that the "normal working day" for work on the project will extend until 10pm on an unspecified number of days.
PLEASE CALL FOR A STRICT 6PM CURFEW ON NOISY ACTIVITIES ON WEEKDAYS, 1PM ON SATURDAYS, AND NO NOISY WORK ON SUNDAYS.
- The EIS refers to Out Of Hours Work (OOHW) that implies actual construction work could extend to 24hrs per day, 365 days of the year, thus excessive noise levels could be experienced all the time for up to six years.
PLEASE CALL FOR THE IMPOSITION OF STRICT RULES AND CONSULTATION ON ANY OUT-OF-HOURS WORK.
- Vibration levels are predicted to be above acceptable levels up to 300 metres from the construction work, possibly causing damage to property and having a detrimental impact on human wellbeing.
- Parts of the Freeway will be closed for several hours each day – **possibly for 24 hours a day in some events** – for enlargement and tunnel-building, disrupting travel, diverting traffic onto nearby roads, and adding to night-time noise and vibration.

- The "upgrade" – ie, demolition and rebuilding – of the High Street, Falcon Street, Ernest Street and Miller Street bridges over the freeway will cause **CHAOS**.
- The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) completely ignores the effect on recent traffic flows etc of the B1 bus link to the Northern Beaches, the proposed B2 between Dee Why and Chatswood, and the North-West Metro. These have already reduced the use of private vehicles significantly – and thus the need for the new tunnels. **PLEASE CALL FOR A RE-ASSESSMENT.**
- The **FINAL COST** of the whole project is completely unknown, because Gladys Berejiklian and her government refuse to publish the business case – WHAT DO THEY WANT TO HIDE? **NOTE THAT IT HAS JUST EMERGED THAT \$4 BILLION OF EXCESS COSTS OF WESTCONNEX WAS [?FRAUDULENTLY] HIDDEN BY THE NSW GOVERNMENT PLEASE DEMAND PUBLICATION OF THE FULL BUSINESS CASE FOR THIS SCHEME BEFORE ANY APPROVAL IS GIVEN.**
- The money spent on the tunnels and freeway upgrade would be FAR better spent on a Light Rail link from Chatswood to the Northern Beaches.
PLEASE DEMAND THAT THIS OPTION BE RE-ASSESSED.
- Explosives for rock-blasting will probably be stored at the Cammeray Golf Club work site.
DEMAND REASSURANCE ON THE SAFETY OF LOCAL RESIDENTS AND ROAD USERS.
- The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) grossly overstates the time-saving the new tunnels will give. It proudly points to time savings driving from (eg) Mosman or Willoughby to the Fish Market or Leichardt, while ignoring the minuscule time savings – **quite possibly EXTRA time** – that ordinary commuters will experience travelling to and from the CBD, North Sydney or Chatswood.
The fact is, Military Road, Miller Street and other local main roads will probably be MORE, not less, congested in rush hours.
- Re-routing of traffic lanes on the Warringah Freeway means that it will be difficult for many drivers on the Lower North Shore to reach their preferred Harbour crossing – eg, Harbour Bridge or Harbour Tunnel – leading to the use of rat-runs through residential areas to reach the desired entry point– eg, diverting from Ernest Street to Miller Street or Falcon Street to reach the Harbour Bridge.
PLEASE DEMAND THAT A BETTER SOLUTION BE FOUND.
- The EIS boasts that the project is on the Infrastructure Australia priority list – but it doesn't mention that it is almost at the bottom of some 18–20 projects listed for New South Wales, and is **NOT included in the "High Priority" or "Priority" project lists.**
- Tolls on the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Sydney Harbour Tunnel are likely to rise dramatically – **and be charged in both directions** – to match those imposed on the (to be privately owned) Western Harbour Tunnel, and to raise revenue to help pay for the project.
I OBJECT TO THIS! I SHOULD NOT HAVE TO PAY MORE FOR EXISTING FACILITIES SIMPLY TO BOOST THE PROFITS OF A PRIVATE CORPORATION.
- The areas and roads in North Sydney LGA that even RMS, in its Environmental Impact Statement, predicts will suffer "moderate" to "high" impact during the years of construction and/or thereafter during operation include the following:–
 - **Cammeray, North Cremorne and Neutral Bay in general;**
 - **Alfred Street North and Kurraba Road; High Street (North Sydney);**
 - **Jefferson–Jackson Reserve; Anzac Park; Cammeray Avenue; Rosalind Street; Ernest Street;**
 - **Morden Street; Warringa Road; Carter Street;**
 - **Cammeray Golf Course; Merlin Street.**

SUBMISSION TO NSW PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO THE PROPOSED WESTERN HARBOUR TUNNEL, WARRINGAH FREEWAY UPGRADE AND BEACHES LINK

With respect, I submit that the NSW Legislative Council should:–

- Insist on a proper cost-benefit analysis and thorough budgeting of this project – all of which should be fully disclosed to Parliament and the public – before any go-ahead is given for work commencement. This should include full disclosure of financial arrangements with interested private parties (eg, Transurban).
- Please insist that TfNSW properly recalculate the supposed time savings for drivers, over routes that the **majority** want to cover, not just those showing big time savings.
- TfNSW should make a proper analysis of traffic needs in relation to population and building growth in areas supposedly served by the new roads and tunnels.
- They should also take into account the wishes of present residents of areas "served" – eg, do Northern Beaches residents really **want** motorways feeding large numbers of vehicles into their residential and recreational areas?
- TfNSW **must** investigate thoroughly – and take budgeting into account with the above analyses – the alternative public-transport options (eg, in the case of the Beaches Link, the possibility of light rail links between Chatswood and Dee Why, and possibly between Manly and Mona Vale), including time and cost savings for travellers.

- Make proper allowance for filtering of all exhaust gases and solid particles emitted into tunnels – **and insist that all exhaust stacks have proper filtration** so that they do not dangerously pollute the air around homes, schools and businesses.

NOTE: Even with the advent of electric and hybrid vehicles, vehicles will still be emitting exhaust fumes – especially diesel fumes from heavy vehicles – for many years. And one of the major toxic airborne pollutants is minute rubber particles worn from vehicle tyres, which are produced by *all* vehicles.

- Insist on the adoption of overseas best practice in relation to tunnel exhausts and filtration (eg, as used for the City of Stockholm ring road), with exhaust stacks a **maximum** of 3km apart. **Please insist that Parliament will not be satisfied with huge amounts of airborne pollutants being discharged from single [unfiltered] exhaust stacks at each end of long tunnels.**

- **Far more fundamentally**, the entire central-Sydney motorway/tunnel network should in an ideal world be redesigned, adopting best modern traffic-engineering ideas.

FOR EXAMPLE, the existing plans envisage a giant "spoke" system, with all vehicles converging on a small central area – in the case of the roads under consideration, in Sydney's Inner West and Lower North Shore – even if their final destination is far away on the other side of the conurbation.

FAR MORE SENSIBLE would have been to design an inner "ringroad" system, in which long-distance traffic (eg, from the airport to Newcastle) would bypass the centre of Sydney altogether, and would peel off to various destinations at junctions spaced around the "ring". In such a system, the Western Harbour Tunnel would be positioned perhaps somewhere in the vicinity of Rhodes & Ryde, or Silverwater & Rydalmere, rather than tunnelling under the centre of the city and feeding traffic onto Australia's busiest road – the Warringah Freeway. (**ON A SMALLER SCALE**, similar misguided thinking envisages huge numbers of cars entering/leaving the tunnels and freeway choking a few roads in the CBD of North Sydney. **This must be re-thought entirely.**)

– Submitted by Michael Wright,

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