

Submission
No 204

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

NSW PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO THE WESTERN HARBOUR & BEACHES LINK TUNNELS

17 JUNE 2021

1. NO BUSINESS CASE FOR THE PROJECT HAS EVER BEEN RELEASED, so how are we to judge it on a cost/benefit basis.

2. THERE WAS NO ANALYSIS OF FEASIBLE ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORT PROJECTS in the *EIS* as required by *Section 115Y of The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

A metro/train line was never considered as an alternative to the road/tunnels option. This is **THE MAJOR FLAW** in the project. Funnelling more vehicles onto toll roads. There is **NO PUBLIC BENEFIT IN THIS PROJECT**.

Stated goals from the EIS:

“Major Transport Benefits of the Project include”:

- **“returning local streets to communities and freeing up local streets for local traffic”**. In fact, it does the exact opposite, forcing local traffic onto rat-runs due to blocked roads and turning restrictions. According to EIS/RMS data, many local major intersections will operate at a **“FAIL” level**, negating any benefit of this project.

- **“supporting the sustainability of local town centres”**. This is a breathtaking claim, given that the on-ramp for the Western Harbour Tunnel, Beaches Link, Warringah Freeway and Sydney Harbour Bridge runs along Berry Street from the Pacific Highway to the Warringah Freeway, in the heart of the North Sydney CBD, the second largest CBD in NSW. There will not be a North Sydney CBD anymore. It will be split in half by a 4-lane on-ramp. North Sydney Council has been working for years to make this area more pedestrian-friendly, with more amenities for both workers and residents. It seems that with this project, the NSW Government is trying to do the opposite at North Sydney. The access and entry for the new Victoria Cross Metro Station will be, according to the NSW Government’s Sydney Metro website, *“via the Pedestrian Plaza opening to Miller, Denison and Berry Streets”*. No mention of it also being the on-ramp for a motorway/tunnel. So on the one hand, we have the NSW Government trying to promote public transport and improve pedestrian amenity, and on the other hand we have it putting the main feeder road for the WHT/Beaches Link in the middle of this new supposedly pedestrian-friendly zone.

3. PROVIDING NEW PUBLIC OPEN SPACE (Stated goal from the EIS)

The appropriation of nearly 6.5 acres of Crown parkland at Cammeray Golf Club for Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link Motorway Facilities removes current public open space, and under the current plan, is not being replaced. This is in addition to the appropriation of public park land (St Leonards Park) during the construction period.

Green Space is already limited in North Sydney, which has highest population per hectare and twice the average density of the North Shore, but the lowest ratio of sports and recreation space.

The area is also part of the Green Grid, linking parks, open spaces, bushland and walking and cycling paths.

4. IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Increased Pollution from Unfiltered Ventilation Outlets

The North Sydney Local Government Area has the highest density of schools per square kilometre in Australia and you are putting all students at risk with increased pollution. The World Health Organisation has declared that outdoor air pollution is already a leading environmental cause of cancer deaths. Double exhaust stacks at Ernest Street Bridge (to expel pollution from BOTH Harbour & Beaches Tunnel) 250m from ANZAC Primary School. If the NSW Government has enough money to build the WHT/Beaches Link and Warringah Freeway Upgrade, it has enough money to filter the ventilation outlets.

5. MISLEADING CONSULTATION & INFORMATION

Important information was not provided, including the Business Case; design options (alignments, portal positions). Consultation documentation is full of misleading language and diagrams (e.g., “Freeway Upgrade” terminology used instead of “Motorway Expansion”; traffic modelling refers to “Do nothing & do something” rather than “without project & with project”. Environmental Impacts Assessment fails to present the impacts; for example the Motorway facility sheds are only shown in distant views and camouflaged green.