

Submission
No 236

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

Name: Name suppressed

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The Hon. Daniel Mookhey MLC
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Submission to the Inquiry into the Impact of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link

Dear Members of the Public Works Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to an inquiry regarding these alarming projects. I strongly object to the Western Harbour Tunnel (including the Warringah Freeway Upgrade) and Beaches Link (including the Gore Hill extension) projects and urge you to recommend that the NSW Government abandon these plans immediately.

First, a little about me. My husband and I live in Morden Street, opposite the Cammeray Golf Course where a major part of these works will take place. I am disabled and a cancer survivor. Part of the reason I live in Cammeray is for the green space, flora and fauna, lack of pollution/dust/noise and the access I have to the city where all my specialists are. These works will severely impact my health over the years from the time the work commences and after it finishes. It will impact my day to day life from the noise, the dust, the pollution and the increased traffic and costly tolls. Walking to the amenities I can will be negatively impacted. It also severely impacts the community I live in, severely impacting health, safety, traffic, noise, pollution, dust and the incredible green spaces with all our wonderful sensitive, endangered species of flora and fauna we have here that are protected and looked after so fiercely by this community. My husband and I were married in Flat Rock Gully, a special place that has been returned back to life for both our community and our wildlife. Ignoring and destroying the hard work achieved over the past 30 years in this protected space by calling it an old dump site is one part of the disingenuous story that has been railroaded to our communities about these awful projects. Our responses have been continuously ignored. Responses that have been fact based compared to the ill conceived, ill researched and out of date works being proposed. My reasons are further outlined in relation to the Committee's Terms of Reference.

I have previously submitted a detailed submission as to why I object to these projects. Please find attached this submission.

For this submission I object to the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link for the following reasons:

The adequacy of the business case for the project, including the cost benefits ratio. No business case has been released to the public to date. Reported cost at the time of printing is \$14-\$15 Billion for both projects but as has been uncovered with the Westconnex project, this estimate will prove woefully underbudgeted.

The adequacy of the consideration of alternative options,

Alternative options have not been comprehensively scoped or compared to a toll road tunnel option. The option to address congestion via a dedicated mass transit solution ie) light rail, metro or rail has not been adequately considered. I have stated in my submissions that if these works were for a major public transport option, I would weather the works being built because in the long run, this would be a huge win for our community and the environment. Surely the 2020 bushfires were enough for politicians to realise that public transport is the way forward, not unsustainable cars. We need to dramatically reduce our carbon footprint. More cars on roads is not the way forward. Moreover, more TOLLED roads, is not the way forward. The cost of these projects to the average Sydney sider from a financial and environmental point of view is too great.

The cost of the project, including the reasons for overruns,

project admits that further testing and risk assessment is required to fully assess multiple levels of risk including serious contamination found in the Harbour and at Middle Harbour dredge sites and dive sites such as Flat Rock Gully (ex-landfill). Cost blow outs and delays associated with other projects have occurred due to unexpected or unmitigated contamination eg West Gate Tunnel, Victoria.

The consultation methods and effectiveness, both with affected communities and stakeholders,

The consultation process for both projects was woefully managed. Each EIS was released just before Christmas, a horrible time to receive such a piece of news as well as one where most people are busy with other activities. Not enough time was given to fully consider each very dense document and make an adequate response in my view. But even then, there were glaring oversights that stood out. These sorts of projects would not be given any sort of go ahead from a risk and compliance point of view in the corporate world. The lack of transparency and accountability of each project is very evident. It is difficult to obtaining and understanding the projects. Clear language has not been used and clear, up to date evidence has not been provided. A shocking display for publicly funded works.

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,

The data used for each project was pre-COVID19. I felt this was yet another disingenuous attempt to manipulate data to support an agenda (ie: tolled roads for cars vs public transport). Life and work has changed dramatically since COVID19. Working from home has now become the norm. Travel patterns have altered. The original cost to benefit ratio no longer stacks up.

The impact on the environment, including marine ecosystems,

Please read my submission for the details I have provided about the impact on the environment these projects will have. The impacts are significant, and the response given to all those concerned have been, in short, trite, ill-conceived and at times, wilfully ignorant.

The impact of the project on nearby public sites

So many public sites are going to be negatively impacted yet both projects EIS attempt to minimise the data about this impact ie) Yurulbin Point and Balls Head (Aboriginal and Natural Heritage), Berry's Bay (large construction platform 5 years), White Bay (location of toxic sludge drying out), Coal Loader (tunnel goes straight under), St Leonard's Park (loss of green space, loss of heritage - first planned park on Nth Shore, contamination concerns, dust and noise), Cammeray Golf Course (loss of space and heavy construction for 7 years, interruption of water supply/ dam for local parks, double unfiltered stack adjacent will be permanent), Flat Rock Gully Dive Site (Aboriginal heritage, contaminated tip area, major water catchment area and flood zone, dive site competes with massive sewage tunnel, loss of trees, feeds out to Tunks and Middle Harbour, Powerful Owls and other species impacted), Middle Harbour and Spit Reserve (contamination 4.5-5 years noisy works, marine life esp breeding grounds interrupted, Northbridge Baths), Clive Park (significant Aboriginal and Natural Heritage), Balgowlah Golf Course (loss of green space and stacks), Wakehurst Parkway (thousands of trees lost and biodiversity concerns), Burnt Bridge Creek (near elimination of water flow permanent – feeds out to Lagoon) and Manly Dam (sensitive endangered species environment, fresh water, feeds out to ocean, run off huge concern with loss of tree buffer to road).

My husband and I are living directly opposite the Cammeray Golf Course as stated before. For us, this means a personal loss of green space and heavy construction for 7 years and a double unfiltered stack adjacent which will be permanent. In a worst case scenario should these projects go ahead, I have asked repeatedly for the stacks to be filtered. The 'theory' provided about not filtering the stacks has not measured up in reality. The unfiltered stacks from the Eastern Distributor (located Flinders, St, Surry, Hills and Stanley&Palmer St, Darlinghurst have proven that the pollution from these unfiltered stacks impacts residents (there is a black film many residents have to remove from their homes and other environs) The fumes/pollution do not magically go up into the atmosphere to never return.

In this day and age, why is Sydney endeavouring to embark on projects that seem to have come from the 50s? We know better now, so many of the world's cities are moving away from roads and tolls towards great public transport projects that have made large positive contribution to the environment AND the communities in these cities. Surely Sydney should be spending this huge sum of money being forward thinking, scientifically sound world leaders rather than archaic, ignorant, extravagant dinosaurs from yesterday?

I would like to have my name suppressed for this submission and I would like to thank you for your time in reading this. It is greatly appreciated and I dearly hope that you will listen to our community and make the serious changes that are necessary.