

Submission
No 262

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 14 June 2021

Partially
Confidential

I object to the Beaches Tunnel project noting it does not have public evidence of sufficient public amenity and does not provide a genuine long-term solution to the northern beaches traffic situation, and overall, no public evidence of justification for using public funds, in particular to the extreme level of public costs publicised that are required.

I also object on the grounds of this project not having sufficient justification on a stand-alone basis.

The project planning has also been dismissive and potentially negligent in the ignorance of basic safety planning for local communities most impacted. Basic measures could be put in place, but when questioned at publicly televised/broadcast community sessions the key planning people on the project have ignored these basic public and community issues, instead focusing only on safety for workers and on-site. These are very basic measures (such as reducing speed limits, putting in place school zone limitations and community traffic lights – all safety elements being afforded to trucks and workers – but yet not infants and primary school students and the community).

The RMS team and engineers involved in the project, in public consultations, have admitted to various major flaws in the project planning, including:

(1) Poor choice of tunnel route and extensive costs that would be better served going via the Spit Bridge and Military Road route. The only reason known for this not to go ahead, as it is apparently a significantly less expensive option, is the disruption it would cause to those who most benefit from the project and does not provide the expected returns to private investors by linking as well into the WHT route.

(2) The project not having sufficient benefit on a stand-alone basis and only being pursued in the current planning from in order to provide returns to private investors on the WHT route. This has been stated by engineers/RMS team in public community consultations

(3) Significant air quality dangers to locals, in particular due to increasing diesel fumes along routes such as Flat Rock/Brooke Street. Roads with significant inclination that are not currently taking heavy vehicle traffic of a significant nature as they are not suited to this type of traffic. Traffic could divert just as easily from the site, along Small street and straight onto a freeway. The argument of using 'non-state' roads does not hold as Rosalind street, right next to a school is already being used. Workers are being afforded safety measures that the local community and school students are not. The project is waiting for a death or catastrophe to occur, before putting in place the most basic measures such as 40-50 zones, traffic lights for locals and students who use these roads for daily community.

The project must also be reassessed following COVID-19 to provide proof that the justification case still stands post COVID. Why is this project, servicing such a small area of Sydney, that has always requested not to have public transport and broader access to Sydney, receiving funding that could support 2-5 other projects across Sydney. Is one of the wealthiest councils across Australia really the neediest in terms of having access to transport for work, jobs and lifestyle?

Please see attached submission for more details.

Beaches Tunnel Objections

June 2020 Submitted.

I object to the project noting it does not have public evidence of sufficient public amenity and does not provide a genuine long-term solution to the northern beaches traffic situation, and overall, no public evidence of justification for using public funds, in particular to the extreme level of public costs publicised.

I also object on the grounds of this project not having sufficient justification on a stand-alone basis.

The project planning has also been dismissive and potentially negligent in the ignorance of basic safety planning for local communities most impacted. Basic measures could be put in place, but when questioned at publicly televised/broadcast community sessions the key planning people on the project have ignored these basic public and community issues, instead focusing only on safety for workers and on-site. These are very basic measures (such as reducing speed limits, putting in place school zone limitations and community traffic lights – all safety elements being afforded to trucks and workers – but yet not infants and primary school students and the community).

The RMS team and engineers involved in the project, in public consultations, have admitted to various major flaws in the project planning, including:

- (1) Poor choice of tunnel route and extensive costs that would be better served going via the Spit Bridge and Military Road route. The only reason known for this not to go ahead, as it is apparently a significantly less expensive option, is the disruption it would cause to those who most benefit from the project and does not provide the expected returns to private investors by linking as well into the WHT route.
- (2) The project not having sufficient benefit on a stand-alone basis and only being pursued in the current planning from in order to provide returns to private investors on the WHT route. This has been stated by engineers/RMS team in public community consultations
- (3) Significant air quality dangers to locals, in particular due to increasing diesel fumes along routes such as Flat Rock/Brooke Street. Roads with significant inclination that are not currently taking heavy vehicle traffic of a significant nature as they are not suited to this type of traffic. Traffic could divert just as easily from the site, along Small street and straight onto a freeway. The argument of using 'non-state' roads does not hold as Rosalind street, right next to a school is already being

In relation to the WHT, Rosalind Street is an incredibly dangerous intersection already and the subject of high levels of foot traffic from toddlers, families, children on the way to Anzac Park School. This was not taken into consideration and poses significant danger and does not have adequate controls in place. NO truck movements should be allowed on Anzac Parade or Rosalind Street during school zone hours. This is standard practice for many international infrastructure projects and negligent that this has not been in place.

adequate safety, sound and pollution measures for local residents, and without public transport inclusions. The project has a huge impact on the local population that can easily be reduced, made safer and take into consideration basic levels of respect for local residents.

The project, for the interest of the public and investors, which is typically pension funds who are likely involved funding the project, needs to disclose, consider and/or amend:

(1) What is the budgeted cost, and why is this money best spent on this route? Early indications suggest a A\$14-15bn budget, vs, for example, NorthConnex of \$3bn and Westconnex \$3.1bn. Does this project justify a cost of 5 or so other major Sydney projects, when people in Mosman or the Northern Beaches have made a lifestyle - not financial - decision primarily to live in these areas and often clearly stated they do not want the rest of Sydney to have access to the peninsula?

(2) The project statistics focus on impact on Spit Road (for example, highly important and regularly needed statistics such as the time it takes someone from Mosman to travel to the Fish Markets, or a Northern Beaches resident to travel to the Airport). Beyond this, for people who need to move around for their actual day-to-day work, what supports the traffic flow data and how permanent is this traffic flow? For example, the RMS in consultation stated that the financials of the project don't work unless it is connected to Western Sydney. Are the numbers reflecting travel from the beaches to Western Sydney people related to construction work and therefore temporary? Has any assessment been completed on this? Pension Fund holders, debt financing companies and their shareholders and Portfolio Managers need to know this if the Government is asking for pension fund investments and if the Government is genuinely looking out for Australian investors, in particular older pension fund holders who are vulnerable and at risk. Or are we seeing another Cross City Tunnel or Dalrymple Coal offload?

(3) Where is the disclosure in relation to holdings of property that people connected to the project already? For example, the project on a basic level does not make sense, other than to improve asset holdings of land owners (and Councilors) in Mosman and property owners on the beaches. On a basic level - Mosman residents have chosen to live there, knowing the status of Military Road. Northern Beaches residents, in general, have rejected public transport. They have clearly said they do not want to have increased access to the rest of Sydney.

(4) What safety controls are you putting in place on Flat Rock and Brooke Street for the local residents? (See statements below)

(5) The project needs real public transport options. Why does such a potentially world-leading city such as Sydney, pursuing such an antiquated strategy, designed not to improve transport for the more general public (which would imply public transport) but instead to simply improve property values for local holders and those connected to Government and Government Contracts? The project needs to have public transport.

(6) You are aware you are destroying the Naremburn local area for the duration of the project. Some homes will be unliveable, due to vibrations from trucks, safety issues, asbestos removal, diesel pollution (based on data the RMS has provided to local residents). What measures are you putting in place for this?

(7) What other truck and heavy vehicle movements will occur outside of the stated hours of "full" trucks? Will air brakes be allowed to be used?

In summary, for the project to continue, and for the safety of residents to be taken into consideration we request that current residents of Naremburn continue to have an area that is livable and not be forced out of their homes and without any benefit from 6-8 years of potential major safety and liveability issues:

(A) A 40-50 zone put in place on Flat Rock and Brooke Street. This will slow traffic and drive more traffic through the tunnel, supporting the project. Many homes need to reverse onto Brooke Street to simply leave their homes/driveways. You are putting many more heavy vehicles on roads that do

not traditionally carry heavy vehicles due to the hills. We know that heavy vehicles increase deaths based on your own statistics. You need to put in measures to stop this, before a resident is killed. You are affording this level of safety to truck drivers already on site. The residents require the same safety. <https://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/downloads/trauma-trends-heavy-vehicles.pdf>

(B) Speed cameras installed on Flat Rock and Brooke Street. Truck drivers on a budget / time sheet will be pressured to break speed limits. You need to install speed cameras, therefore also supporting revenue to the government.

(C) Install traffic lights for residents at Slade/Grafton to afford the same safety to residents as you believe truck drivers require. Why are you providing more safety for truck drivers than local children? Yes, it is a state road, but children do not tell the difference and already significant near crashes (and crashes) already occur. You don't have all these statistics on your website, I also noticed, as I see the accidents happen then they are not recorded.

(D) Bus route and lane implemented on Flat Rock/Brooke Street that stops on the street to actually reduce traffic on this road over the long-term. The tunnel, RMS has stated, does not achieve this.

(E) Proper rehabilitation of the Flat Rock area, including improvement to the Willoughby Leisure Centre to a 50m pool.

(F) Sound proofing on Brooke Street to enable local residents on Brooke Street and within earshot of to continue to live there.

(G) Stop referring to this solely as a 'state' road as if you aren't impacting 'local' communities. You are aware fully that Brooke Street is not a typical state road nor was it ever built nor designed to be

(H) Any movement of landfill requires an investigation. How it is carried (not in open trucks with 'tarps') and removed and investigation into the companies removing it.

(I) If Brooke Street is only considered 'state' and not 'local' then put in zoning of apartments that reflects this so that local residents can move out. We are local, real people, with families, near a road that in no way has traffic typical of a state road.

You need to put in proper safety, pollution and other measures - before, not after - someone dies.

(J) Use hydrogen or electric trucking vehicles, as many business and even some councils are already pursuing. RMS has stated in consultations that diesel levels will be unhealthy for local residents, in particular children.

(K) Filter the 'ventilation' towers to international standards.

(L) Do not allow air brakes to be used on Flat Rock or Brooke Street.