

**Submission  
No 251**

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

**Name:** Mr Peter Rowed

**Date Received:** 16 June 2021

---

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to to make a submission to the Parliamentary Committee in regards to the Western Harbour and Beaches Link Tunnel project.

In summary I am opposed to the construction of both tunnels and in particular to the Beaches Link Tunnel and give my reasons below in accordance with the terms of reference.

I would like to preface my responses with background and introduction. I have lived in northern Sydney for almost my entire life and have lived in Cammeray for almost 30 years where my wife and I raised our two children. We have been drawn to this area for its green space and remnant bushland where we regularly walk and meet our neighbours and the many visitors to the area.

Our children spent their childhood playing in the bushland and have developed a deep love of the Australian natural landscape and have gone on to careers caring for the natural environment and spend much of their recreation time immersed in our National Parks. Such is the power of preserving these natural landscapes and educating children of the importance of the natural world.

I am committed to the enhancement of the local bushland and my wife and I give 2 half days per month volunteering with our local North Sydney Bushcare at Tunks Park and Mortlock Reserve.

My sincere concern with this project and projects like these is that they diminish our clean air and quiet landscapes, substituting them for built, noisy industrial environments without providing overall benefit to the community at large.

I thank you for your consideration of my response below.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Thomas Rowed

---

Responding to the terms of reference:

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

I cannot judge as no business case, if it were to exist, has been released. The adequacy of the consideration of alternative options

Only alternative motorway tunnels appear as alternatives and no detailed public transport options of which there are many were considered. As tunnels merely move

congestion to choke points, the externalised costs of these do not appear to have been considered.

The EIS should consider construction and contamination risks of the project as compared to tunnel alternatives.

### **Public Transport**

Frenchs Forest is an identified growth area with increased demand for journeys to Chatswood and the CBD. As the BLT will accommodate more cars it follows there would be more vehicle pollution concentrated in the area around the exhaust stacks.

It follows that increasing public transport capacity on the Roseville Bridge and Military road corridors could better and more economically meet current and future demand and reduce the inevitable congestion on the Sydney Harbour Bridge that the BLT will bring.

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

No comment

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

No comment

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

No comment

**(f) The consultation methods and effectiveness, both with affected communities and stakeholders**

The release of the WHT and BLT EIS was at Christmas when our attention was not focussed on family and holidays. Had it been released say two months later there would have been greater awareness in the community of its existence and been subjected to greater scrutiny.

Coupled with that, our local member, The Right Honourable Gladys Berejiklian has made little effort to ensure that our community is aware. Her office in Sailor's Bay Rd has only an A4 sized document on display and for distribution, has not made her position on the project public other than support for the process (which is not the project).

There are 50 locked notice boards in the North Sydney LGA and I have never seen any information posted. I have never received any information in my home letter box nor in my PO Box at Cammeray.

I walk regularly in Tunks Park and have conversations with the many walkers. I know many of my neighbours and have conversations with them. It was by one such conversation that I became aware of the project rather than through community consultation. The vast majority of people I speak with are not either aware of the project or if they are, are unaware of the severe impact. At the Kirribilli markets yesterday (13 June) I had numerous conversations with locals and knowledge of the project was the exception.

Given that this is the single biggest issue placing an adverse effect on quality life and for many, property values, the local member's silence is indeed perplexing.

**(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**

It is my personal experience that COVID has released a working culture with supporting technology of more remote working and either less travel to office work site substitution of travel in peak time for out of peak time travel.

There has also been an uptake in on-line shopping.

As we emerge from COVID it appears these trends are persisting in large part and are expected to become permanent.

The base line forecast for journeys should therefore be adjusted to feed into the decision of the benefit this project will bring.

**(h) Whether the NSW Government should publish the base-case financial model and benefit cost ratio for the project and its component parts.**

Agree for transparency and to ensure professional scrutiny.

**(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**

The Government should absolutely publish the business case and subject it to detailed scrutiny by experts and the community.

I believe if there were even a weak business case it would have been politically expedient to release it.

Consequently, failure to conceal it arouses suspicion in the community that the beneficiaries of the project will be the consultants, builders and contractors and the losers will be the local community and the NSW taxpayers.

**(j) The impact on the environment, including marine ecosystems Wildlife and Habitat**

During construction, 16 acres of bushland habitat will be cleared at the top of a catchment with flow on effects to the rest of Flat Rock Gully, Tunks Park, Middle Harbour, the Sailors Bay foreshores, and local and regional north-south and east-west wildlife corridors.

The futures of Flat Rock Gully and the currently pristine foreshores of Clive Park are unclear and part of this bushland/shoreline habitat may be lost to our area forever. Hundreds of local species will lose their habitat, be driven away by loss of habitat, noise, lights and contamination or bulldozed under during construction.

Numerous threatened species of animals (including the Powerful Owl and microbats) and plants have been identified in the EISs as being affected by the projects and proposed ameliorations are inadequate. I have seen black cockatoos, numerous Eastern Water Dragons and Eels in the reserve and I hear the owls most nights. There have been a number of sightings of a lyrebird and a group of swamp wallabies also call this reserve their home.

The use of biodiversity offsetting to buy credits elsewhere when local animals are lost merely drives species extinctions in our LGA. It is worth noting that the G7 nations meeting in the UK this month have committed to act decisively to stop species extinction.

**Marine**

The environmental health of Middle Harbour and foreshores has improved dramatically over the last few decades in terms of the clarity of the water, return of sea organisms and of marine fish and animals. The health of these waters is threatened by the destruction of foreshore areas, dredging of the harbour floor, potential for existing contamination to be redispersed, storing of contaminated materials and the increase in marine traffic on Middle Harbour and across to Spit Point. More than 70 threatened species around Middle Harbour are at risk during construction and from the disruption of contaminated sediment.

**Climate Change**

Greater car use will add to climate change. Public transport alternatives would have a lesser effect and coupled with the NSW State Government's recent pledge to ensure all

public transport will be emission free strengthens the argument to prefer public transport over private car usage.

### **Air Quality**

The impact on air quality, as compared to the public transport alternatives, should be considered in so far as clean air is essential for human health and enjoyment.

Given that Traffic Related Air Pollution (TRAP) increases will detrimentally affect school children at ANZAC Primary, Cammeray Primary Neutral Bay Primary and Sceggs Redlands as well as the numerous Pre School Day Care including that on the corner of Miller and Amherst St in Cammeray, the project should not proceed on that basis alone and I cite a study published in Science Direct ([Associations of traffic-related air pollution and greenery with academic outcomes among primary schoolchildren - ScienceDirect](#)) has found that:

- Greenery around primary schools was associated with reading, numeracy and grammar.
- TRAP was inversely associated with reading, numeracy and grammar.
- TRAP mediated some associations of greenery with reading, numeracy and grammar.

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

No Comment

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

The impact of the projects on nearby public sites includes the permanent loss of 2.8 hectares of community green space, equivalent to four soccer fields, in Cammeray Park; and the impact on areas such as Bicentennial Reserve, Flat Rock Gully, Northbridge Baths and Clive Park mentioned above.

The BLT also poses contamination risks to Tunks Park which is at risk from contamination emanating from the old tip site in Flat Rock Gully.

**(m) any other related matter**

No comment

---