

Submission
No 295

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

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The Hon. Daniel Mookhey MLC
Chair
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<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=2767#tab-submissions>

Submission to the Inquiry into the Impact of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link

Dear Members of the Public Works Committee,

I am writing this submission to express my serious concerns regarding the Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Project, and I thank you for the opportunity to do so. I live in Northbridge very close to the proposed dive site for the project, and am very concerned about the impact this will have upon the health and wellbeing of my family. I am also very concerned about the lack of justification for this project as there is no published business case, it is not high on Infrastructure Australia's priority list, it is inconsistent with the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and the project has not been fully scoped and compared with an alternative mass transport public transport option, most notably heavy rail.

The proposed project will have a significantly detrimental impact upon the life of my family, both in the construction phase and after completion. For example, I often take my children for bush walks through Flat Rock Gully and bike rides in the surrounds. Flat Rock Gully is a green corridor that is so important given Northbridge's proximity to high density constructions. Should the Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Project proceed, my family will lose access to the regular ways in which we exercise and enjoy nature, thus diminishing our quality of life significantly. I am concerned about the loss of so many trees that the project necessitates at a time when climate scientists are understanding even more about the imperative to increase, not decrease, the amount of trees on our planet.

Our house is less than one kilometre from the known contaminants in Flat Rock Gully and I have serious concerns about the air quality during the five year construction period as well as after its completion. I am deeply worried about the release of toxins into the air that my family breathes, caused by the proposed construction. I request that if this construction sadly proceeds, that the Flat Rock Gully dive site be relocated to the Artarmon Industrial Park area which will materially mitigate these risks to the surrounding environment and health of community members.

Below are my comments on the specific terms of reference for this inquiry:

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

There has been no publicly published business case and the costs demonstrated in the EIS seem to far outweigh the benefits. The EIS also fails to fully scope many aspects such as utilities and contamination which poses a risk to the project. I am concerned about the under-considered nature of this project and its lack of identified pros and cons. The business case is not transparent for this proposed project, and thus cannot be held up to public scrutiny.

b) *The adequacy of the consideration of alternative options*

The proposed project is concerning because no public transport alternative study has been done with which to compare this project. A full options analysis is required to truly compare the proposed project with public transport alternatives, given the huge expenditure being undertaken with taxpayer funds.

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 timing of release of this project has made it untenable for the the community to fully considerate it. This project impacts a large number of schools and passes through highly residential areas. Families, community groups and schools have been under a huge amount of strain throughout the exhibition stage due to the current pandemic. School P&C's did not have the opportunity to review the documents and parents were caring for children on school holidays. The proposed project should be re-exhibited to the community well after the COVID-19 crisis has passed and when we are in a position to understand the permanent changes that have resulted.

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*

No comment

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

No comment

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*

No comment

j) *The impact on the environment, including marine ecosystems*

I have significant concerns about the impact of the proposed project upon the environment. I am worried about the contamination risks it presents to the environment and to human health, as well as the negative impact on our waterways and green spaces. I am concerned about the high level contaminants which are known to exist in Flat Rock Gully, Middle Harbour, Cammeray Golf Course, Spit Reserve, and Wakehurst Parkway because I have serious concerns about the impact that it will have upon the health of my family and community. I am very concerned about the piling and drilling in Middle Harbour that the project will require and to the dumping of spoil in our ocean.

The proposed project has a poor climate profile at a time when we should be looking to projects which reduce our emissions. The Paris Climate Agreement (to which Australia is a signatory) specifies carbon neutrality by 2050, which requires substantial greenhouse gas emissions reductions in the current critical decade. The proposed project will serve to compromise our climate due to very high water usage, very high concrete production volume, and very high waste generation.

The proposed project will have an unreasonable level of impact on the Quality of Life of residents during the tunnel construction and operation. For example, my children will not be able to participate in sailing activities through Northbridge Sailing Club for at least the five year construction period. My family will also not be able to use the Northbridge Baths. I will not be able to kayak in Middle Harbour for the foreseeable future. I will not be able to take my children on bush walks in Flat Rock Gully, which they enjoy and benefit from significantly. The construction of the Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Project prohibits almost every way in which the members of my family exercise and maintain physical and mental wellbeing. I am very concerned about pollution caused from the construction such as high levels of dust, noise, and vehicle pollution. I am very concerned about the unfiltered pollution stacks proposed for this project, and request that they are filtered to reduce the serious concern of detrimental health outcomes upon residents, particularly schools which are very close to the proposed stacks.

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

The proposed project is a tolled road and there is little evidence that it will alleviate current congestion. I am concerned that the proposed Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway will exacerbate toll avoidance, thus continuing congestion on current routes. I am also concerned at the lack of evidence that the proposed project will in fact reduce congestion. During the five year construction period, I am concerned about the considerable traffic issues that will be caused in my area. Specifically, there will be new traffic lights to enter Flat Rock Gully, which will create further delays. The constant flow of vehicles to the proposed dive site at Flat Rock Gully will create 'ratruns' in the area and significantly congest Eastern Valley Way, Sailors Bay Road, and Strathallen Avenue. Again, moving the dive site to the Artarmon Industrial Park area will materially mitigate these risks.

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

I am very concerned about the impact upon Bicentennial Reserve, Flat Rock Gully, Northbridge Baths and Clive Park. The proposed project results in the loss of 2.8 hectares of community green space, which is an essential component of community (and environmental) wellbeing.

m) *Any other related matter*

No comment