

Submission
No 297

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

The Beaches Link is not a transport solution. It is an expensive gift to toll operators. Alternatives have not been properly considered and during the consultation period, current alternatives such as public transport have been withdrawn to force traffic onto roads.

Needs have also changed with increased work from home which invalidates many core assumptions around demand.

I use myself as an example.

I used to travel from North Balgowlah to the City every day on the E68 bus.

I cancelled my city co-working arrangements in Apr 2020, and now work from home 80% of the time.

The E68 bus route was cancelled in Dec 2020 with the result that there is now no viable public transport option from home to the city.

As a result, when I need to go to the city for business, i now drive.

This being said, I WOULD NOT use the tunnel because the time saving is too small for the section of journey that the tunnel would address.

During construction though, i would expect my travel time to CBD to significantly increase from what it is today. I would never do enough trips to regain that lost time, so the tunnel accounting for its construction would actually cost me time.

I have been timing journeys from North Balgowlah (approximately the tunnel entrance) to Neutral Bay Junction (approximately the tunnel exit) then beyond to crossing the bridge and reaching parking in Kent Street.

The time saved on a 35-45 min average trip into the city is 4-10 mins, It is approximately 25% of journey time.

On a trip out of the city to home there has not been a single day where the tunnel would make sufficient difference to justify paying a toll.

There are bad days of course, but these are few and far between.

Even on bad days the bottleneck is bridge approaches, bridge and CBD congestion which backs up to affect feeder roads. The tunnel would not improve this by feeding traffic into bottlenecks faster.

Expansion of B1 and increased parking at B1 stops would get me back to my preference of public transport, freeing up road capacity for the tradies and others who cannot use public transport. The potential of the B-Line is being stifled by inadequate park and ride provisions which would considerably increase uptake.

Beyond public transport, conventional engineering could remove major Military Rd bottlenecks. An overpass/underpass to replace spit junction intersection would massively improve traffic flow. Pedestrian crossings could be replaced with pedestrian bridges removing further lights. The same underpass/overpass approach at other junctions would split through traffic from local traffic.

Re-engineering military road would be achieved at a fraction of the cost and environmental impact than the proposed tunnel and could be implemented in stages bringing benefits sooner. (Obviously harder to apply tolls though).

I have attached some sample journeys, the time of journey at the top of the screen shot, lap 1 (or lap 2 if 3 laps recorded) being North Balgowlah to Neutral Bay, lap 2 being tunnel and CBD to Kent Street.

I object to the tunnel and recommend this review measure journey times to independently verify that claimed benefits are a fantasy.