

Submission
No 331

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 17 June 2021

Partially
Confidential

Submission re the Beaches Link Tunnel Project.

I have lived in the Willoughby Council LGA and have been an active local citizen and bushcare volunteer for many years. I am in the Drive – Flat Rock Gully bushcare group which works in an area that is going to be devastated by the planned dive site and general tunnel works. This group was instrumental in reclaiming the area from an old disused tip site over the last 20 years.

I have been attending information sessions, both in person and online since this project was first announced and have yet to see a clear business case presented for the project. The veil of secrecy that covers this is highly questionable for a public taxpayer funded project. Especially since there appears to have been no allowance made for changing traffic and public transport usage due to Covid-19.

Both EIS documents were released at Christmas at a time which made it very difficult for local citizens, let alone those with more knowledge and ability to interpret them, to have the time to respond.

Despite the environmental impacts, the contamination risks and the construction impacts, the EISs give no serious attention to alternatives to motorway tunnels with no real consideration given to any other (e.g. public transport) options.

Issues of concern about the effect on bushland, wildlife and the marine environment have not been dealt with adequately or completely ignored in the EIS. The tunnel works will result in the clearing of over 16 acres of bushland habitat 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. The Flat Rock Gully area is a reclaimed former tip site, containing asbestos, and other poisonous material. The failure to effectively manage contamination risks directly impacts resident's access to recreation due to identified threats including to Bicentennial Park and Flat Rock Gully from disturbance of this area.

Hundreds of local species will lose their habitat, be driven away by loss of habitat, noise, lights and contamination or bulldozed under during construction.

The traffic impact of the trucks at the proposed dive site in the Flat Rock Gully area will be extreme with the associated pollution from the extra traffic.

The response of government and developers to concerns and complaints from residents from vibration have, from West Connex experience, shown themselves to be inadequate. I do not hold any hope that concerns about contamination of the area, threats to wildfire, pollution and vibration from this project has been or will be dealt with openly and transparently.

The lack of compliance with and enforcement of Conditions of Approval (COAs) applying to the Western Harbour Tunnel have already shown that the processes aren't working.

The way in which local concerns and questions have been ignored or treated in a glib and patronising manner, the lack of a business case and the verifiable errors in the EISs underline the community

feeling that the NSW government has decided on its course of action with no sense of responsibility to its constituents and no interest in the broader issues created by a project of this size, complexity and cost. Further, the fact that this project directly impacts the Premier's seat and constituents and her unwillingness to hear objections or meet with concerned citizens just underlines the lack of interest and respect for community engagement in these projects.