

Submission  
No 335

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

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date Received:** 17 June 2021

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Partially  
Confidential

Sir/Madam,

My family and I live in North Balgowlah. I am writing to voice my concerns around the proposed Beaches Link Tunnel and the affect it will have on our community and the local environment.

In the first place I would like to ask that you reconsider the justification / need for a tunnel in the first place.

I assume that the plan for a tunnel connecting the Northern Beaches has been around for years if not decades. And yet isn't there a strong case to be made that patterns of movement and the "daily commute into the CBD office" routine have changed since the COVID-19 outbreak in early 2020 - and aren't necessarily coming back.

Coronavirus lockdowns seem to have achieved for remote working what years of IT upgrades and "agile working" initiatives failed to do. For example, I used to commute 5 days a week into a CBD office - and yet now go into the office 1 or 2 days at most. I'm sure my experience is far from unique throughout the Northern Beaches.

I note that Viable Transport Solutions are asking the government to halt the development process to allow for a suitable review, and to then publicly release the results of the review. Please can this be considered?

About the project itself I have three major concerns:

Concern 1: Construction impact

The construction phase of the project will undoubtedly impact North Balgowlah residents with dust, noise, vibration, and heavy vehicle traffic in the area. North Balgowlah will have construction surrounding most of the suburb and the EIS indicates that during construction there will be.

Over 3,000 vehicles per day across all sites.

1,690 vehicles per day at the Balgowlah Golf Course site alone.

1.5 heavy vehicles every minute or 4.5 vehicles (total) every minute.

Over 4,000 homes subjected to excessive noise

Construction work to proceed 24/7 for up to 7 years.

Can I request that you reconsider how to ensure that the impact of trucks/vehicles is not felt on the suburban streets that are already hard to navigate with local traffic and buses. Can you also seek to ensure areas around schools and parks are not impacted and are safe for families and children to walk or ride around the local community. And in the longer term, how do you plan to disincentivise commuters from using North Balgowlah's residential streets as a rat run to save time from congestion and money from using the toll roads.

Concern 2: Ventilation stacks

Health experts agree that pollution from traffic exhaust poses serious health risks. Emissions include nitrous oxides and particulate matter that, when breathed into the lungs, causes respiratory diseases such as asthma and emphysema, and cancer. There are several schools, preschools, childcare centres, and sporting fields within the vicinity of all the proposed ventilation stacks and from a parent's point of view, the increased level of pollution is unacceptable. Balgowlah Boys school, which is where our son is likely to go to school, looks as though it will be one of the worst-affected. We can't afford the fees for private schools, leaving us few other options. We are very concerned about the impact that the nearby construction site, and then the ventilation stacks, will have on his health.

If the tunnel were to go ahead, please can you ensure that the stacks are properly equipped with full filtration to minimize these impacts. At the very least the air pollution is kept at the current levels.

### Concern 3 - Environmental impact

We are fortunate to live in an area that incorporates some spectacular bush land, reserves, and beaches and would urge that further consideration is given to the major environmental impacts, including but not limited to:

Movement of contaminated sediment to Clontarf and Middle Harbour (The Spit) potentially causing pollution of the neighbouring beaches.

Destruction of Burnt Bridge Creek and surrounds (e.g., bushland, wildlife etc) due to a possible 96% reduction in water flow.

Discharge of 428,000 L per day of wastewater into Queenscliff Lagoon & Beach, resulting in health hazards for people and animals who swim in the waterways.

Pollution of Manly Dam reserve, resulting in the potential extinction of rare flora and fauna and the last remaining areas of Duffy's Forest, and meaning that one of the only swimmable dams in NSW is no longer safe for public use.

Loss of recreational activities with the mountain bike trails that are used for riding, walking, and running.

Can you provide assurances that future generations get to experience the natural wonders of the area in all its glory.

What is the point of making the northern beaches more accessible if the very heart of what makes the northern beaches so special is destroyed?