

Submission  
No 348

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

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date Received:** 17 June 2021

---

Partially  
Confidential

# Submission Against Beaches Link Tunnel

---

I have lived in the suburb of North Balgowlah since 1980. I have been part of the Save Manly Dam Catchment Committee since \_\_\_\_\_ when the community first joined together to fight a housing development which encroached into the Manly Dam Memorial Park catchment area. Since that time, I have continually had to fight for environmental issues in the Manly/Seaforth area, and particularly for Manly Dam as private developers and NSW Govt Manly Vale Public School have wanted portions of the natural bush for development purposes. Now we have this tunnel with its associated roads and on/off ramps which, again, are eating into the unique and precious parkland catchment area and changing the whole viability of my local area.

I definitely oppose this project as I think it is too expensive, too risky for the environment and not the appropriate solution to relieve the travel issues for people travelling from Northern Beaches via Seaforth towards the city. My reasons in relation to particular terms of reference are listed below:

## A The adequacy of the business case for the project, including the cost benefits ratio

I am suspicious that the Government's business case and cost-benefit analysis for the Beaches Link is not yet available to justify this project to residents. I fear that data relating to future traffic demands is unreliable due to the changed usage of technology and work patterns from Covid-19, as well as the world-wide attention on **innovation** to address global warming with a focus to reduce carbon outputs.

## B The adequacy of the consideration of alternative options

**Innovation** enables alternative and **forward** thinking options such as:

- Modes of transport, public light rail, tram, bus (eg B-Line), and private e-bikes/skate boards etc.
- Decentralised working practices, with up-to-date projections on (peak-hour) travel destinations to justify the project
- Government incentives to businesses to adopt more flexible work practices, to councils to build safe bike pathways and central bike parking bays to allow link-up with public transport, to NSW Govt itself to invest in public schools to equalise learning opportunities so that transportation of children to out-of-area schools is reduced.

## C The cost of the project, including the reasons for overruns

The engineering requirements of the Beaches Tunnel Link are very complex and risky making this tunnel the most **expensive per kilometre** in NSW. Cost and time overruns have been synonymous with previous projects and unforeseen complications (such as with the Sydney light rail) and have cost the NSW taxpayers dearly, not only in monetary terms but also in mental health. I have no doubt that unforeseen environmental impacts for this project, as with many other projects, will occur and will be devastating and costly.

## J The impact on the environment, including marine ecosystems

The **impact on the local environment** will be transforming.

- Dredging Middle Harbour will stir up the sediment and impact our marine environment, including a penguin colony, and the very popular Clontarf beach and picnic park.
- The vibration and noise from dredging and truck transportation over the period of construction will impact on many families and their homes.

- Truck movements to remove sludge will clog our roads for 6 to 10 years as they take up parking and move along our major and minor roads to transport their loads away to other parts of the state.
- The Balgowlah Golf Course at the top of Spit Hill, and across the road from Balgowlah Boys High School, will be changed to a construction storage area and eventually will be part of a multi-lane road. This will mean a loss of green space and trees eventually to be turned into a concrete, heat-collecting thoroughfare. It also will impact negatively on the high school.
- Burnt Bridge Creek will be impacted by changed water flows with the dying off of trees and plants, wildlife unable to survive and the loss of a beautiful walk and bike path.
- Wakehurst Parkway will be widened (with the removal of natural bushland containing aboriginal carvings) and built up with banked sides allowing polluted run-off during construction and impacting on the Manly Dam Memorial Park... a unique fresh-water swimming dam/ picnic area with natural bushland and home to native animals and birds.

Personally, I will be devastated to witness the devastation of our beautiful green suburb to a place of “tar and cement” for this unjustifiable project .

- The huge number of polluting and dangerous trucks as they drive through our suburbs will create noise, pollution, and, undoubtedly, be the cause of accidents and stressful driving and parking situations for the 6-10 years of construction.
- The impact on our recreational parks in Clontarf, North Balgowlah and Burnt Bridge Creek will be diminished as special places .
- The widening of Wakehurst Parkway will no doubt see a huge increase in road kill as animals from Manly Dam wander out from the bushland onto the multi-laned road.
- I expect there will be a number of “rat-runs” which will impact on my suburb (and others) as people try to avoid trucks on the main roads during the construction period, and in trying to avoid the \$8.00 (I believe) road toll after construction.

I am unable to understand the need for this tunnel. It is said that there may be a saving of 15 to 20 minutes in time per trip and for this we have huge irreversible, environmental impacts throughout the area and total inconsistency with the NSW greenhouse gas emissions reduction policy.

I feel that the government is not being open and honest and that this project should not go ahead. A focus on public transport, particularly light rail from East to West seems a far viable project.