

Submission
No 353

INQUIRY INTO IMPACT OF THE WESTERN HARBOUR TUNNEL AND BEACHES LINK

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The Hon. Daniel Mookhey MLC
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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,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to an inquiry regarding these projects. I strongly object to the Western Harbour Tunnel (including the Warringah Freeway Upgrade) and Beaches Link (including the Gore Hill extension) projects and urge you to recommend that the NSW Government abandon these plans immediately.

I have lived in the area for several decades, moving from Mosman to Cremorne and now Cammeray. I have raised my children here and commuted to work in the city, in Ryde and – far too often – to the airport. I am now mostly locally based as I know longer work but continue to value the ability to move about easily, either by public transport, car or on foot. It is a quiet area with great open spaces, bush walks and proximity to the harbour.

My objections to the project that are to be addressed by this inquiry are related to the following terms of reference.

- (a) the adequacy of the business case for the project, including the cost benefits ratio,**
- (b) the adequacy of the consideration of alternative options,**
- (c) the cost of the project, including the reasons for overruns,**
- (e) the extent to which the project is meeting the original goals of the project,**
- (f) the consultation methods and effectiveness, both with affected communities and stakeholders,**
- (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,**
- (h) whether the NSW Government should publish the base-case financial model and benefit cost ratio for the for the project and its component parts,**
- (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,**
- (j) the impact on the environment, including marine ecosystems,**
- (k) the adequacy of processes for accessing and responding to noise, vibration and other impacts on residents, during construction and operationally,**

The proposed work will destroy much of what is so wonderful about the area. The damage that will occur will be done with seemingly little accountability to the people, like myself and my neighbours and the next generation, who will be negatively affected by the work.

As an affected resident I attended various 'community consultations'. Few questions were satisfactorily answered at these sessions and there is no evidence that the concerns raised were addressed.

I note that a business case was not released to the public, let alone one that addressed the other options to deal with traffic issues that are supposed to be solved by these projects. Given the experience of other large cities, ongoing issues around climate change and changing work patterns, surely the government should have explored in detail public transport options such as light rail to meet the needs of the predicted transport needs. Assuming of course that the government has identified and quantified these needs. Another thing which has not been made public.

In the absence of a business plan we are given cost estimates that are simply mind boggling. Even worse, there will be overruns as we know the plans involve disturbing existing contamination in the harbour and Middle Harbour dredge and dive sites such as the glorious Flat Rock Gully – a wonderful spot for walking and exploring. It is if the government has a bottomless pit of dollars when it comes to infrastructure projects at the same time as well documented requirements to build sustainable and constructive communities go under addressed. Even worse, projects like the one we are discussing will negatively impact existing thriving communities and will continue to impact people living and visiting for decades. History will not be kind to the decision makers who have pushed this through nor to those who stand by.

It is impossible to understand the rationale for a project that impacts so negatively on so many thriving communities and sensitive areas. Especially a project that has consistently been met firstly with community concern and then community anger. Those who are not angry are those unaware of the scope of the works and the destruction that it will bring. We are already seeing the anger spread as the initial worksites are being established.

I am happy to have my name published as part of this inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Corrigan.