

Submission
No 380

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

16/06/2021

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey MLC
Chair
Public Works Committee
NSW Legislative Council
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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 concerning 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.

First, a little about me. Have been a long-standing home-owning resident of Cammeray since 2009. My two children in year two (age 7) and kindergarten (age 6) attend Cammeray Public School where I drop them off and pick them up from, each working day. They will attend this school until 2028, before going to other local high schools, Wenona and Shore. I am also on the Cammeray School P&C counsel and a representative of the Environmental & Sustainability committee, as I educate students about sustainability and facilitate environmental projects.

I enjoy running through Flat Rock Gully on the 3 days a week I work from home. My children enjoy playing sports at Green Park and Tunks Park green spaces, which we regularly frequent as a family. I'm in a netball team competing weekly, outdoors at Willoughby Leisure Centre and I travel to Neutral Bay often to shop and visit nearby family. The office where I work is located in Artarmon, near enough for me to cycle to, on my bicycle.

To say my families' daily lives will be "affected" by these tunnel developments is an understatement. Note also that my son is an asthmatic, so the potential impacts on air quality in particular are a health concern for my family. As well as increased congestion on streets trying to get to and from the school, loss of green spaces that we currently enjoy for activity and leisure, not to mention the real kicker is the impact to the local environment and biodiversity which we treasure. Oh and did I mention reduced value on house prices?

These projects provide little to no gain for local residents of Cammeray, yet we are being made to suffer 6+ years of local construction works, noise pollution, truck congestion and environmental degradation, at the expense of inviting MORE cars onto Sydney roads. When instead, taxpayer funds should be put towards **renewable** and **sustainable** forms of transport that will **lower carbon emissions** and **save fragile ecosystems**.

As an example, just to isolate one area out of multiple affected areas within the construction zone, my concerns for Flat Rock Gully are:

- 6 acres of well-used community space will be taken over by tunnel construction for 6 or more years
- This means the removal of hundreds of native trees and the bulldozing of bushland, seats, paths, lawns and creek works, with no guarantee that the Flat Rock Gully site will be returned to bushland
- With over 70 truck movements an hour carrying contaminated spoil through our already congested local roads and near local schools
- The tunnel will be dug through toxic landfill from the old tip site. The ground is unstable, and the tip is known to contain asbestos and other toxic material that will run off into Sydney Harbour. It's taken 60 years for this area to recover.
- The tunnel will include unfiltered stacks; situated very near to local child care centres and schools in the area, as well as local commercial shops and streets

My reasonings are further outlined in relation to the Committee's **Terms of Reference**.

I have previously submitted objections as to why I object to these projects. You may cross reference them against my name. The objections I still have for this submission particularly address your [terms of reference](#), and they are regarding:

(a) the adequacy of the business case for the project, including the cost benefits ratio,

The lack of a business case being released to the public! With a reported cost \$14-\$15 Billion for both projects and no business case, the cost-to-benefit assessment of this project does not add up as it currently stands.

(b) the adequacy of the consideration of alternative options,

Why have alternative transport options not been explored? There is no reporting or research of other public transport solutions that could be cheaper and more effective than a tunnel.

(c) the cost of the project, including the reasons for overruns,

The project at this point requires further testing and risk assessment of cost blow outs, to mitigate the risk of toxic contamination at Middle Harbour and Flat Rock Gully – which used to be a toxic waste site! Why on earth would we dig it up again and let the runoff slide into Sydney Harbour, killing everything on its way down the creek? Cost blow outs and delays associated with other similar projects are an example of unmitigated contamination and poor assessments in the first place, for e.g. [West Gate Tunnel, Victoria](#).

(f) the consultation methods and effectiveness, both with affected communities and stakeholders,

Consultation and communication with the community has been poor. I submitted an objection to the Western Harbour Tunnel project, but no design changes were made following the EIS submission process. Also, there's been no changes made to the plans since I submitted an EIS objection to the Beaches Link project.

(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,

Changes to work and travel patterns due to the Covid-19 pandemic have not been considered since the original EIS, post-COVID-19. My employer, one of Australia's largest

media broadcasters, now has a companywide HR policy where 40% of our work can be done from home. Many large corporations have adopted similar policies which have saved them considerable office expenses. 40% less travel to offices means less public movement and less cars on roads, therefore these infrastructure projects need to be re-assessed in accordance with new behavioural changes and transportation needs, post Covid-19.

(j) the impact on the environment, including marine ecosystems,

Both tunnel projects will heavily impact many environmentally sensitive areas including Sydney Harbour, Balls Head / Berry's Bay and the Coal Loader, Cammeray Green Spaces, Middle Harbour, Flat Rock Gully, Balgowlah Golf Course, Wakehurst Parkway and Manly Dam.

Environmental impacts include; marine life, heavy tree losses, toxic contamination risks, air quality reduction (filter the stacks!) and overall an increase in carbon emissions. These concerns have been raised by MANY concerned residents and campaigning groups which I support including

<https://wepa.org.au/>

<https://www.saveflatrockgully.org/home>

<https://www.stopthetunnel.org/stopthetunnels>

<https://committeeornorthsydney.org.au/>

<https://www.facebook.com/SaveManlyDamBushland/>

to name a few.

(l) the impact of the project on nearby public sites, including Yurulbin Point and Dawn Fraser Baths, and

Other public sites that will be impacted

- Yurulbin Point and Balls Head (Aboriginal and Natural Heritage)
- Berry's Bay (large construction platform 5 years)
- White Bay (location of toxic sludge drying out)
- Coal Loader (tunnel goes straight under)
- St Leonard's Park (loss of green space, loss of heritage - first planned park on Nth Shore, contamination concerns, dust and noise)
- Cammeray Golf Course (loss of space and heavy construction for 7 years, interruption of water supply/ dam for local parks, double unfiltered stack adjacent will be permanent)
- Flat Rock Gully Dive Site (Aboriginal heritage, contaminated tip area, major water catchment area and flood zone, dive site competes with massive sewage tunnel, loss of trees, feeds out to Tunks and Middle Harbour, Powerful Owls and other species impacted)
- Middle Harbour and Spit Reserve (contamination 4.5-5 years noisy works, marine life especially breeding grounds interrupted, Northbridge Baths)
- Clive Park (significant Aboriginal and Natural Heritage)
- Balgowlah Golf Course (loss of green space and stacks)
- Wakehurst Parkway (thousands of trees lost and biodiversity concerns)
- Burnt Bridge Creek (near elimination of water flow permanent – feeds out to Lagoon) and
- Manly Dam (sensitive endangered species environment, fresh water, feeds out to ocean, run off huge concern with loss of tree buffer to road)

(m) any other related matter.

Finally, my primary concern is the **impact on local air quality** that will be caused by **unfiltered exhaust stacks**. There are more than 15 schools and 10 pre-schools in the

Cammeray – Neutral Bay - North Sydney area. Why in anyone's right mind would we consider NOT FILTERING the exhaust stacks???. Applying filters to the stacks should be a non-negotiable legally enforced feature of this project. That's what any self-respecting 1st world country would do, to protect its citizens (children!) from health complications. I mentioned above my son has asthma and this will affect our family greatly to live in polluted air.

A recent public survey conducted by Cammeray Public School counted only 1.2% of residents own electric or hybrid cars at this time. Petrol exhaust is going to remain problem for the next two decades, at least. To argue that most cars will be electric and there'll be no exhaust emissions in 20 years - does not stand up in Australia. As the take-up to electric vehicles is stalled in AU compared to European countries, because only a minimal amount of the energy on our grid comes from renewables. Electric vehicles are in fact not helping the environment at all while 90% of our power comes from the burning of coal. So why buy an electric car?

I digress... The stacks need to be filtered! Full stop.

I am happy to have my submission published but please have my **surname** suppressed.

Yours Sincerely,

Resident of Cammeray