

Submission
No 386

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 17 June 2021

Partially
Confidential

The submission we made in March 2020 on this proposal is attached. Our concerns are still current but have deepened further.

Attention: Director, Transport Assessments
Planning & Assessment, Department of Planning
Industry and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

29 March 2020

**Objection: Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway
Upgrade - SSI-8863**

We are writing to express our strong objection to the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade, as currently proposed.

We are not against progress per se and, as Sydney grows, recognise the importance of additional infrastructure. We believe the current proposal must be improved to meet our concerns, as well as those of our local community and NSW as a whole.

“Big picture” concerns

Global experience of toll road construction has demonstrated conclusively that projects like this increase air pollution, encourage more car use, prove very costly to users through tolls and soon fill the increased road capacity they create.

Our concerns are:

- Inadequate consideration of public transport alternatives. Sydney has a poor system, when compared to many other major cities, and has a record of bad decisions- eg the light rail has proven to be well over budget, significantly delayed in its completion and a slow and unloved way of getting around- what was done in, say, Singapore would have been far better.
- We seriously doubt this will help significantly with addressing Sydney's goal of reducing long-term traffic congestion.
- We can see no evidence that the proposal has been properly tested against competing public transport projects.
- CO2 emissions will increase due to increased car use- we should be moving in the opposite direction, with efficient and smart public transport solutions.

Local Community concerns

Rozelle, Balmain and Birchgrove will be severely impacted by the construction and use of the project on several fronts. This has caused great stress to many residents, including the long term elderly.

- There is no requirement for the filtration of exhaust stack emissions and there is clearly a risk this will threaten public health, including nearby schools. The EIS did not guarantee this.
- The toxic sediment generated from the harbour work is a major risk to marine life and local residents. On the former, we are keen scuba divers and frequent the harbour. It is very encouraging to have seen the improvement in the water quality and consequent abundance of life over the past 10 years. This trend will be put at risk by this project, which would very much be out of step with current community values.
- The Yurulbin ferry wharf has been recently upgraded and is now threatened with closure for a long period. Apart from an appalling waste of public funds, it reduces public transport options in the community- again out of step with its values.

Our personal concerns

This project will be of no personal value to us, but fully understand it's to service a much broader community. However, we will be affected by it, with major risks to our current and future wellbeing.

- It's clear from the EIS that we, and many others, will be affected by noise, air quality and risk of damage from vibrations, settlement and ground movement.
- Our house is a c1880 timber workman's cottage, our home for the last 30+ years. It sits on sandstone blocks and would be very susceptible to these physical factors.
- Many properties in the suburb do not have off street parking, including our own. The inundation of construction teams into the area will put a major strain on scarce resident parking.
- Loss of trees and green space at Yurulbin point is a major issue, as green space is rare enough in a densely populated inner-city location. Whilst there are promises of rehabilitation, this will take years- and refer to the "Trust" issue below.

Conclusion

Set out above are our particular concerns over this project. We recognise we can't stop it but believe it must be improved to mitigate the impact of the issues- on us, the community and Sydney as a whole. It is a missed opportunity to transform our city's transport system to make getting around Sydney clean, cheap, easy and fast. It's what our community wants.

To the issue of Trust. The consultation is based on current documentation, including the EIS. History of other infrastructure projects (including WestConnex, Barangaroo open space promises, train dampening measures in cross harbour tunnel from Millers Point) demonstrates changes are frequently made after, and at odds, with the current documentation. Some may be improvements, but there is a greater risk of negative changes, driven by costs, politics and other influences. This dramatically destroys public trust in the process. We are particularly concerned that the proposed depth under our house, as set out in the EIS, won't be honoured.

Yours sincerely,

Birchgrove
NSW 2041

Declaration of any reportable political donations made in the previous 2 years	NONE
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