

Submission
No 407

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

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Attn: Inquiry into the impact of the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link
17/06/2021

I have been a resident of Balgowlah for 20 years with two grandchildren who I hope will be attending Balgowlah Boys High School in the future and I strongly object to the Beaches Link Project. I am deeply concerned at the prospect of this project going ahead for all the environmental and health risks it poses now and in the future to my family and the community.

It's a short walk to Balgowlah Boys from my house and I fear that my street will be in the zone affected by noise, vibrations, dust and traffic during the construction phase as well as increased traffic and air pollution once the tunnel is in use. My partner and I face the daunting prospect of uprooting our life and moving away from the place we love in order to protect our health.

The premise of building an enormous tunnel and road network to accommodate vehicular traffic is out of date and short-term thinking. As we move towards reducing emissions in an effort to slow climate change and ensure a healthy environment for future generations, the consideration of this project is completely unjustified and does not fit with the NSW greenhouse gas emissions reduction policy of net Zero by 2050.

The benefits of such a project are questionable and are far outweighed by the detrimental and permanent impacts to the community and environment of the Northern Beaches.

I object to the project for the following reasons:

The contamination risks it presents to the environment and to human health and the negative impact on our precious waterways and green spaces.

The proposed inclusion of unfiltered ventilation stacks releasing exhaust in Balgowlah, Seaforth, Cammeray and Artarmon so close to Balgowlah Boys, St Cecilians and Seaforth Public Schools in Balgowlah, and Anzac Park Primary School in Cammeray amongst others is particularly alarming. The levels of particulate matter emitted from these stacks will add to existing unsafe levels and is a threat to the health of thousands of residents and school children. The government has a duty of care to ensure levels of particulate matter are reduced, not increased.

Moreover, playing fields are proposed to surround the unfiltered stack in Balgowlah. It's questionable that further playing fields are even necessary in this location and presents an obviously unacceptable and unnecessary threat to the health of children as they take part in sporting activities.

I object to the project due to the scale, extent and risk of groundworks in sensitive residential areas and foreshore environments.

Groundwater flows into the Burnt Bridge Creek will be reduced by around 80% while the tunnel is being built and up to 96% after completion of the project. This fall in the water table will have a devastating impact on the vegetation along the creek including the Baringa Bush Reserve and the habitat of the grey-headed flying fox colony. The quality of water that flows into Manly Lagoon and the ocean at Queenscliff Beach will be compromised – and during times of reduced rainfall, (of which there are increasingly more), the water will be polluted. We must ensure the quality of our water remains at the optimum levels we can achieve or we will lose valuable habitat and the use of our precious beach. Must we destroy the very

environment that entices tourists and residents alike? This impact along with so many environmental impacts will be permanent.

The destruction of more than 12 ha of high value bushland with the widening of the Wakehurst Parkway from North Seaforth to the intersection of the Parkway with Warringah Road will have significant impact on native threatened species and add further to air pollution.

The impacts of dredging during the construction phase on marine life and the integrity of the water quality of Middle Harbour, Spit Marina, Sandy Bay and Clontarf Beach and Children's Ocean Pool is of particular concern as it risks releasing high levels of dangerous toxins.

The water quality in Manly Dam will also be compromised due to run off from the Seaforth construction site and destruction of bushland along the Wakehurst parkway resulting in the flow of polluted water. In the EIS, the TfNSW admits that it cannot control this happening when it rains heavily. For example, in 2020 this would have happened every month.

I also have grave concerns about the unreasonable level of impact on the quality of life of residents during the tunnel construction because of the expected 50 truck movements an hour in both northerly and southerly directions and the 6 day per week and possible night work bringing noise and vibration with potential to damage homes.

The resulting rat runs in surrounding residential streets will bring extra noise, pollution as well as congestion. To suggest that the tunnel will ease traffic congestion is nonsensical as the extra numbers of vehicles emerging from the tunnel onto roads unfit to accommodate the increase will inevitably just move the problem further along the route. This logic would also apply in the other direction as the City of Sydney moves to encourage less vehicular traffic and more public transport options. The result of fewer parking spaces, the light rail and more pedestrian traffic areas in the CBD means that cars emerging from the tunnel will find movement restricted.

The B-Line buses have been embraced by commuters and have shown to be successful in reducing congestion but no public transport alternative study has been done with which to compare this project.

There has been published discussion about transport alternatives such as light rail, heavy rail, electric buses and these alternatives deserve equal weighting in the Beaches Link debate.

Furthermore, there has been no publicly published business case and the costs demonstrated in the EIS seem to far outweigh the benefits. The EIS also fails to fully scope many aspects such as utilities and contamination which poses a risk to the project.

This project is a missed opportunity to transform Sydney into a world class, healthy and sustainable city with a strong public transport system. Now is the moment to be visionary and to bring our city into line with current global trends. The EIS demonstrates that this toll road will be extremely expensive to build and high risk with little benefit. I would respectfully ask that an alternative public transport feasibility study be published before any further planning occurs so that impacts and outcomes can be fairly compared.